United Nations A/67/PV.82

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

82nd plenary meeting
Friday, 17 May 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expense of the United Nations (A/67/693/Add.13)

The Acting President: Before proceeding to the items on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/67/693/Add.13, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/67/693/Add.12, Sierra Leone has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/66/693/Add.13?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 20 to the Second Committee. To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft resolution before it today, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 20 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

Draft resolution (A/67/L.65)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkmenistan to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.65.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me express my gratitude to all delegations for their constructive and fruitful negotiations that resulted in such a significant and valuable draft resolution (A/67/L.65) on the reliable and stable transit of energy resources. I would like in particular to thank the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Secretariat for their valuable contribution to the preparation of this draft resolution.

Energy is a central issue in nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today. Universal access to energy is essential for jobs, security, climate change and food production, as well as to increasing incomes, strengthening economies and achieving equality.

Universal access to energy is one of the Millennium Development Goals, and the Secretary-General is leading a Sustainable Energy for All initiative to make

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-33840 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

it achievable. In recognition of the importance of access to energy for sustainable economic development, the High-level Group on Sustainable Energy for All and the global Energy Access Practitioner Network have been launched, bringing together stakeholders from the private sector and other partners.

Beginning with initiatives in the private sector and with regional authorities and national Governments, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, along with those groups and many other stakeholders, has been working on developing a more integrated approach to universal access to energy. Theose efforts were endorsed by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which highlighted the fact that 2.5 billion people cook using open fires and have no access to any other form of energy. It is clear that the most vulnerable communities need access to energy for their development. Universal access to energy is essential to eradicating poverty.

Ensuring efficient and reliable energy transportation across countries, regions and continents is one of the main challenges in guaranteeing access to basic energy resources. Turkmenistan is one of the leading suppliers of energy resources, with the fourth-largest reserves of hydrocarbon resources in the world. We have therefore consistently called for the establishment of a stable and reliable system of international energy supplies and for the elaboration of interactive frameworks for global energy markets that take into account modern realities. Turkmenistan believes that it is essential to take consensus-based decisions that serve as a basis for cooperation on the reliable and stable transit of energy.

The reality of the past few decades has shown that a complex, multifaceted geopolitical process is under way at the global level, and new factors are emerging that are no less of a threat to peace, stability and development than terrorism, extremism or armed conflict. Unpredictable and erratic jumps in energy prices are the direct result of instability in the international system of energy supply markets. The geographic location of delivery routes has become a dominant factor in sustainable development and the successful development of countries, regions and entire continents.

With respect to the historical background of the draft resolution, let me point out that, in 2008, upon the initiative of the President of Turkmenistan, the General Assembly, at its sixty-third session, adopted a resolution entitled "Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation" (resolution 63/210), which was sponsored by 57 countries. Such broad support demonstrated that the international community was unified in understanding the global significance of the issue of energy supplies, which has become an important step in establishing multilateral dialogue on the issue.

In April 2009, in accordance with that resolution, the capital of Turkmenistan hosted a high-level conference on the reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development. That meeting brought together the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the heads of a number of competent international organizations, high-level governmental delegations, representatives of the major world energy companies and financial institutions, and international experts. In May 2010, in Ashgabat, the Government of Turkmenistan and the OSCE held a conference on the theme "Strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia for promoting stable and reliable energy within Eurasia".

The meetings held on this issue produced proposals on considering the ways and means to strengthen international cooperation in order to ensure the reliable transportation of energy resources while balancing the interests of producers, transit countries and consumers and taking into account the views of concerned States, international organizations, the business community and civil society. Participants expressed the need to continue dialogue to identify the main principles of energy transport that are acceptable to all stakeholders.

The next step in that direction is the Secretary-General's timely request seeking the views of Member States and the relevant regional and international organizations on the issues relating to the reliable transit of energy and on the possible modalities for international cooperation, and to communicate those views to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

Turkmenistan is proposing to hold the first international experts' meeting in Ashgabat in the first half of 2014. The meeting will provide a forum for international experts to exchange opinions on this issue. That will make a major contribution to the preparation

of the report. The Government of Turkmenistan will cover all the financial costs associated with holding the meeting of experts. The draft resolution therefore entails no budgetary implications for the United Nations. We are confident that the meeting will promote a common approach to ensuring a reliable and stable supply of energy in today's world.

That is why we propose that the General Assembly consider draft resolution A/67/L.65, which we submitted to the General Assembly with the support of all countries of the Central Asian and Caspian region, the European Union, landlocked countries and other States. The adoption of the draft resolution, entitled "Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation", will undoubtedly be an important step on the way to resolving one of the most pressing issues of sustainable development.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.65, entitled "Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Saijin Zhang (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the draft document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.65: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, India, Japan, Jordan, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Seychelles and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.65?

Draft resolution A/67/L.65 was adopted (resolution 67/263).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20 at its 61st plenary meeting, on 21 December 2012. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution before it today, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will further recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (b) of agenda item 20 to the Second Committee. To enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I also take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (b) of agenda item 20 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

(b) Follow-up and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Draft decision (A/67/L.66)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/67/L.66, entitled "Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/67/L.66?

Draft decision A/67/L.66 was adopted (decision 67/558).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(r) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

Draft resolution (A/67/L.29)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on agenda item 121 and its sub-items (a) to (w) at its 40th plenary meeting, on 19 November 2012.

I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.29.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): In my capacity as the Chair of the group of members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in New York, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation". The draft resolution is consistent with the spirit, mission and purposes of resolution 3369 (XXX), of 10 October 1975, by which the Assembly decided to invite the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and of its subsidiary organs in the capacity of an observer.

It should be recalled that this draft resolution was initially submitted in early December 2012, but was later withdrawn upon the request of a group that sought further discussions on certain provisions. In the intervening period, extensive negotiations took place that resulted in this finally agreed upon draft resolution.

In its preambular paragraphs, the draft resolution reaffirms the shared common goals in preventive diplomacy, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding, reconstruction and development. It further highlights the desire of the two organizations to continue to cooperate closely in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and scientific fields, in their common search for solutions to global problems such regional and international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, fundamental human rights and combating international terrorism. It welcomes the initiatives for interfaith dialogue undertaken by the two organizations and notes the adoption of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the establishment of the Department of Family Affairs at its general secretariat to deal specifically with issues concerning women and children, underscoring cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It also welcomes the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to continue to strengthen cooperation within the two organizations in areas of common concern and review and explore innovative ways and means of enhancing mechanisms of such cooperation through the recently established working group.

In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution underscores, inter alia, the shared common goals of the two organizations in promoting and facilitating the Middle East peace process so that the process can reach its objective of establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region. It welcomes the cooperation between the two organizations towards combating intolerance and the stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief, recognizes the strong need for global awareness about religious intolerance, condemns any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and welcomes cooperation towards addressing that issue with all urgency.

Before concluding, I would like to express my gratitude to all the participating delegations that have persevered over the past six months in discussions leading to the achievement of a common understanding on all the issues.

I now request all Member States to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/67/L.29 by consensus.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Saijin Zhang (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in document A/67/L.29, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Montenegro.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.29?

Draft resolution A/67/L.29 was adopted (resolution 67/264).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (r) of agenda item 121?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of agenda and allocation of items The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly allocated agenda item 60 to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. In order for the Assembly to proceed expeditiously to take action on the draft resolution before it, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider the item directly in plenary meeting and to proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 60 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Draft resolution (A/67/L.56/Rev.1)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Solomon Islands to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): Under agenda item 60 and on behalf of the sponsors Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu and the additional sponsors Samoa, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, I have the distinct honour to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1, entitled "Self-determination of French Polynesia" and dated 1 March 2013.

Agenda item 60 remained open at the conclusion of the 59th plenary meeting, held in December 2012. We come to this principal organ of our multilateral Organization because of our shared belief in it as the chief deliberative and most representative body of the multilateral system. More importantly, the Assembly is a body that promotes fundamental freedom for all people.

Historically, French Polynesia was inscribed by the administering Power on the original United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories by way of resolution 66 (I), adopted in 1946, together with New Caledonia. That was done in compliance with the obligations under Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations, Article 73 e, which required the administering Power to provide the General Assembly with information on developments towards the full measure of self-government in those territories. One year later, in 1947, the General Assembly was no longer furnished with information on French Polynesia, and the subsequent list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, published in 1963, omitted the Territory. What amounted to a de facto removal of French Polynesia and New Caledonia from United Nations oversight occurred without the concurrence of the General Assembly.

It was not until 1986 that the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/41, which resumed international recognition that New Caledonia was a Non-Self-Governing Territory within the meaning of the Charter, which provided appropriate international oversight for a legitimate process of self-determination. Accordingly, the General Assembly adopts a resolution on New Caledonia each year in the exercise of its review of the process of self-determination under way, pursuant to the Nouméa Accord.

Two years ago, in June 2011, the Council of Ministers of the Government of French Polynesia took a decision seeking self-determination through the United Nations process. The Territory's Assembly adopted a resolution in August 2011 to the same end. That resolution enjoys wide international support at the highest political level. Within the Pacific region, leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum have noted their support for the principle of self-determination for French Polynesia since as far back as 2004, and most recently in 2011 and 2012. Heads of Governments at the second "Engaging with the Pacific" conference in 2011 made a similar call, and the Polynesia Leaders Group has also made a pronouncement on the issue.

In 2012, at the global level, the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Heads of State and Government of NAM endorsed French Polynesia's right to self-determination specifically in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including the landmark

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Discussions on a draft resolution, including informal consultations among Member States, have been going on around the corridors of the United Nations for a while. The matter of a draft resolution on French Polynesia's self-determination was initially taken up in 2011 at the end of the first year of consultations. This was delayed at the request of the administering Power because of its own national elections, held in May 2012. While there is no organic link between the national elections of an administering Power and the exercise by the people of a territory of their inalienable right to self-determination, in the interests of flexibility it was agreed to postpone consideration at that time, leaving open the relevant agenda item for consideration at the beginning of 2013.

Accordingly, consultations continued with Member States throughout 2012, and a text of the draft resolution was published as A/67/L.56 on 7 February, followed by two informal meetings on the text with Member States. The revised text that emerged from this process was published on 1 March, taking into account substantive recommendations offered by interested delegations. The text of the revised draft resolution is now tighter and consistent with the agreed language of the 1986 resolution on New Caledonia (resolution 41/41 A). It was our wish and call to have the draft resolution introduced in March and then in April, but that did not happen. We are glad, however, that it is now before us.

The spirit and purpose of the draft resolution complies with the established procedural practice of the General Assembly, which remains the ultimate authority for considering and referring the question of French Polynesia's self-determination to the Fourth Committee, a matter that is within the scope of the Charter. Under Article 73 e of the Charter, the administering Power is required to provide information on French Polynesia. As I said before, the last report was received 66 years ago.

Draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1 is based on the principle that it is for the Non-Self-Governing Territory of French Polynesia to choose its future destiny in a just and fair process. It sends a simple message of peace and hope to a population that wants to determine its future. That right is also enshrined in the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which entered into force in 1976. This matter of decolonization remains unfinished business for the United Nations. The consideration of the draft resolution was based on three primary reference documents: the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. They provide a clear and solid foundation for the role and responsibility of the United Nations in efforts aimed at achieving peace and self-determination.

Let me now respond to the some of the misunderstandings generated by the campaign launched by our friend and partner France. The outcome of elections on French Polynesia must not be equated with a referendum. It has no relevance to the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination. The draft resolution creates a process for this Non-Self-Governing Territory's population to determine its political future, be it in sovereign independence, free association with the administering Power, maintaining the current status quo or integrating politically with the administering Power.

The draft resolution outlines a peaceful process and focuses on every aspect of the long-term interests of the people of French Polynesia. We and the other sponsors call on all members to adopt it by consensus, and in so doing to support the Charter and honour the Decolonization Declaration. We believe in the decolonization process — which many of us went through — as it is conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. As my predecessor the late Mr. Francis Saemala said in our national statement 27 years ago during the debate on New Caledonia (see A/41/PV.92), that decolonization process, through resolution 41/41 A, on self-determination, helped many of our countries, including my own, attain that status smoothly. The role of the United Nations provided the assurance that progress towards statehood and nation-building was being made under the Organization's watchful eye.

In that connection, we the sponsors believed in our multilateral system then, and we now once again call with confidence on everyone to support the principle of self-determination and adopt the draft resolution before us by consensus.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1, entitled "Self-determination of French Polynesia".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1, entitled "Self-determination of French Polynesia", I wish to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the Assembly requests the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to consider the question of French Polynesia at its next session and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. In anticipation that the request for documentation contained in that paragraph would constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management for one document to be issued in all six languages annually, beginning with 2014, this would entail additional requirements for $101,800 for documentation services in the biennium 2014-2015. No provision has been included under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for that activity and, as such, an additional allocation of funds would be required.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1, additional resources in the amount of $101,800 would be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 under section II, "General Assembly and Economic and Social Affairs and Conference Management". That would require additional appropriations of $101,800 to be included in the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce, that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in that document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1: Samoa, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.56/Rev.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 67/265).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Neenan (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom disassociates itself from consensus on resolution 67/265. The United Kingdom's position on the United Nations decolonization process is well known. We regret that the Special Committee on Decolonization continues with its outdated approach.

In addition, on this particular resolution, the United Kingdom believes that it is not for the General Assembly to determine in any particular case that an obligation exists for a State to submit information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Dadema (Netherlands): We regret that the Kingdom of the Netherlands must disassociate itself from the consensus on resolution 67/265, entitled "Self-determination of French Polynesia". The Kingdom of the Netherlands does support the inalienable rights of the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination. However, the General Assembly must adhere to the views expressed through democratic processes by the people of such non-self-governing territories, including French Polynesia.

Mr. Berger (Germany) (*spoke in French*): I want to state that in the light of the letter from President-elect Gaston Flosse to the President of the General Assembly and the resolution adopted yesterday by the French Polynesian Assembly disapproving of the resolution before the General Assembly, Germany is of the opinion that the General Assembly should not have continued its consideration of resolution 67/265. Germany therefore disassociates itself from consensus and requests that the Secretariat reflect this position in the record of this meeting.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): The United States strongly affirms the principle of self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as one of the fundamental values of the Organization. The facts in this case are clear. The people of French Polynesia, through their

democratically elected representatives, have made clear that they do not support resolution 67/265. The newly elected Government, which takes office today, has notified the General Assembly that this resolution "ignores our autonomy and the will of our people". We are surprised that the sponsors have continued with General Assembly action on this resolution, given the will of the people it purportedly benefits. For these reasons, the United States disassociates itself from consensus on this resolution.

Mrs. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico recognizes the inalienable right to self-determination of people. It is one of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, enshrined specifically in paragraph 2 of Article 1. It was also reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 2625 (XXV). The principle is also recognized in article 1 of the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights. This right is enshrined in the Constitution of Mexico as a guiding principle of our foreign policy.

It is precisely because of our strict respect for that principle that Mexico believes that, in the case we are considering today, we must guarantee the rights of all of the parties involved to freely exercise that right. This is part of the equitable procedure between parties, which the Assembly must guarantee.

Mexico would therefore have preferred to have seen a positive response given to the request by the new authorities of French Polynesia, which were elected by a democratic process and assumed office this very day, to postpone the consideration of this matter to allow for the establishment of official dialogue with the authors of this initiative and the General Assembly.

For those reasons, the delegation of Mexico wishes to put on record its reservations with regard to the manner in which resolution 67/265 was adopted.

Mr. Díez Bartolomé (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina joined the consensus in favour of resolution 67/265 out of respect for the right to self-determination of the people of French Polynesia, in accordance with resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on decolonization. The resolution just adopted is clearly in the spirit of resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on decolonization.

At the same time, Argentina believes that the Special Committee on Decolonization is the appropriate forum for tackling the question addressed in this resolution. We have full confidence in the work carried out Special Committee and believe that the Polynesian people will be able to convey its position regarding the status that that is aspires to attain in that forum.

We are convinced that decolonization is a process that must be supervised by the United Nations, in which the administering Powers fully shoulder the responsibilities they bear in order to attain the objectives set out in resolution in 1514 (XV).

The return of French Polynesia among the territories under the consideration of the Special Committee on Decolonization will undoubtedly contribute to moving forward the work remaining to be done with regard to that territory, in keeping with the principles established by the United Nations for such cases.

This principled position is based on Argentina's firm commitment to the self-determination of all peoples in all cases recognized by the United Nations, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I wish to take the floor to briefly explain the position of Indonesia on resolution 67/265, which the Assembly has just adopted. The Charter of the United Nations declares that one of the purposes of the Organization is to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. The right of self-determination is also one of the principles stipulated in Indonesia's national Constitution. It is reflected in our foreign policy, with the caveat that it cannot be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action that would dismember or impair totally or in part the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign or independent States.

Indonesia is of the view that the consideration of the question of French Polynesia during the next session of the Special Committee on Decolonization is solely based on a specific historical context and shall not set a precedent for those territories that used to be on the agenda of the Special Committee but the status of which has already changed.

Moving forward, we encourage the Government of France and the French Polynesians to continue to engage in constructive dialogue that would best serve

the fundamental interests of the people of French Polynesia.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I now give the floor to the representative of Solomon Islands.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): On behalf of the sponsors of resolution 67/265, let me thank all those who joined the consensus on the resolution. We also note those who had other positions. We thank them all and we look forward to working with them. We look forward to once again seeing the administrating Power, France, and the Non-Self-Governing Territory, French Polynesia, continue their cooperation within the appropriate body.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 60?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 35

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/802)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.64)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.64.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As a representative of the country that has held the presidency of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic since January, when the seventh ministerial meeting of States members of the zone was held in Montevideo, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.64, to which a small amendment was just made, eliminating the phrase "with appreciation" in paragraph 2.

This is a text that, with the relevant technical updates, is based on the two previous resolutions on this subject (resolutions 65/121 and 61/294), which were adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in December 2010 and September 2007, respectively. We have added a reference to one of the most important commitments made at the Montevideo ministerial meeting concerning the process of revitalizing the Zone, in order to encourage more regular and in-depth meetings of leaders and experts from the countries of the two South Atlantic coastlines.

The draft resolution takes note of the recent report of the Secretary-General (A/67/802) and the adoption of the Montevideo Declaration and Plan of Action, the two substantive documents adopted by members of the zone at the most recent ministerial meeting. We hope the outcome of that meeting will be an important milestone on the road towards achieving the objectives of the zone and in the process of revitalizing it.

In addition, the draft resolution reaffirms the role of the zone of peace and cooperation as a forum for greater interaction and support among member States. In that respect, we welcome the interest expressed by several countries to provide and benefit from opportunities for cooperation in different areas of work identified in the Action Plan, such as mapping and exploration of the seabed, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and its resources, air and sea transport, the fight against organized crime, peacekeeping and trade facilitation, among others.

On behalf of the member States of the zone, I urge the various organizations, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as other institutions and bilateral actors, to support the efforts that countries of the zone are undertaking to implement its objectives, in particular the Montevideo Plan of Action.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the delegation of Angola, outgoing President of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, for its hard work. Uruguay is committed to the revitalization of the zone and hopes to hand over the presidency to Cape Verde in 2015 with a consolidated agenda and concrete results to show for our efforts.

The delegation of Uruguay welcomes the support of all delegations to this draft resolution, especially its sponsors.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina is proud to be a sponsor of the draft resolution just introduced by the representative of Uruguay. We became a sponsor on the basis of the conviction that the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is extremely important. This is an initiative that was taken in 1986 by Brazil with the support of my country, Argentina.

As the Government of Argentina had the chance to highlight at the most recent ministerial meeting of the zone, held in Montevideo in January, not only have the issues of importance to the countries of both regions with coastlines on the South Atlantic not declined in their urgency, but there has been an increase in those countries' responsibility, willingness and determination to overcome the difficulties that must still be dealt with. That is necessary in order to implement the shared ideal of cooperation against the backdrop of decades of international relations characterized more by the North/South dichotomy and the legacy of the Cold War than by the potential for cooperation between developing countries.

We thank the Government of Uruguay for hosting the very fruitful Montevideo meeting. At that meeting, we were able to adopt substantial documents and concrete proposals to give new impetus to and revitalize the zone.

A fundamental characteristic of the zone is that it is a strategic relationship between peers. This initiative makes it possible to connect the two sides of the South Atlantic and take advantage of the opportunities for cooperation between the two regions, which still have great potential in terms of coordinating and further promoting their relations.

The shared interests of the countries of the region are amply reflected in the relative ease with which they were able to reach common positions on issues on the international agenda. In the Montevideo Declaration, we see a convergence of visions on issues that remain extremely sensitive, such as the need to continue fighting to put a rapid and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. We expressed our continued concern with situations that have a negative impact on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of certain member States of the region, and we supported their efforts to promote the principles of a peaceful resolution of conflicts and to find negotiated solutions to territorial conflicts that affect them. Furthermore, on issues such as sustainable development and climate change, or the importance of oceanic and marine resources, among others, the convergence of views of the countries of the region is a reality.

Of fundamental importance is the status of the zone as a zone not only of peace and cooperation, but also free from nuclear weapons. This effort is part and parcel of the principles of peace and security that led to the birth of the United Nations, as well as various regional and subregional organizations to which the States of the region belong. That is why Argentina considers it appropriate that even those countries that are not located in the zone should maintain a responsible and respectful posture with regard to the aims of peace and security and the eradication of weapons of mass destruction established by the zone.

Moreover, the possible use of South Atlantic routes for drug trafficking, piracy and terrorism are challenges that have been identified by countries in the region. We need to find a solution to those challenges that recognizes the differences among the countries of the region without external interference in order to be able to appropriately address those issues in a way that reflects their multidisciplinary and multidimensional nature.

The Montevideo Plan of Action once again translated political determination into concrete measures of cooperation and recognized the variety of sectors where the potential for South-South cooperation was identified. I underscore the cooperation planned in the area of mapping and exploration of the seabed, the protection and conservation of the marine environment and living marine resources, marine science, air and maritime transportation, port security, maritime safety and security, defence, public security and combating transnational organized crime, among other issues.

Believing it essential to work on concrete cooperation projects among countries of the zone, Argentina identified a number of concrete proposals and offers that were included in the Montevideo Plan of Action in order to meet the needs identified during the exchanges that led to its adoption. In that regard, Argentina has made cooperation programmes available to the other members of the zone, as reflected in the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/67/802). I refer to cooperative initiatives in the areas of science and innovation, industry, agricultural development, defence and security, as well as cooperation in determining the external limits of the continental shelf, among other issues.

In conclusion, we thank Member States for their support for this regional initiative, which embodies the active commitment of both coasts of the South Atlantic to social and economic development, strict respect for human rights, international law, peace and international security.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): Twenty-seven years ago, Brazil proudly participated in the establishment of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic by the General Assembly. The initiative at that time constituted an innovative commitment between African and South American countries towards the creation of a South Atlantic identity.

For my country, it is clear that the founding principles of the zone remain as important now as they were in 1986. The consolidation of the South Atlantic region as a zone of peace, free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, embraces the promotion of sustainable development and South-South cooperation. It is a contribution to the recognition of the central role that developing countries play in the world today.

The convening of the seventh ministerial meeting of States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic in Montevideo on 15 and 16 January enabled us to pursue our efforts aimed at the revitalization of the zone and at deepening cooperation among members. In that regard, it is my pleasure to congratulate the Government of Uruguay on having successfully organized and hosted that meeting, and to thank it and the Uruguayan people for their kind hospitality.

As South America and Africa's participation in world dynamics grows, the South Atlantic will gain relevance not only as a busy commercial route or as a reservoir of valuable natural and mineral resources, but also as the expression of our commitment to the pursuit of economic and social development within the bounds of the sustainability of our countries. The members of the zone would like to count on the international community to strengthen the zone in all its aspects. Our endeavours are guided by social justice, cooperation and long-lasting peace. Brazil strongly believes that a permanent dialogue can prevent conflict, and that is the very meaning of the term "zone of peace".

To achieve the goals of peace and cooperation, social and economic inclusivity must be at the core of our actions. Cooperation among the members of the zone should therefore be intense and wide-ranging, including in areas such as the rational use of energy resources, the sustainable and rational use of marine resources, the facilitation of trade and investment, the sustainable management of coastal areas, the exchange of experts in marine scientific research and education.

The zone is a promising area of economic growth and prosperity, with fast-growing economies that can contribute to a future of development and increasing trade among its members. African and South American States members of the zone are bound by a common cultural heritage and by strong historical ties, yet we are determined to deepen our mutual knowledge and to better work together towards our established goals.

During the seventh ministerial meeting of the States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, our Ministers reinforced their commitment to pushing for increased cooperation among the Member States, building on undertakings agreed at the ministerial meeting held in Luanda in 2007, and at the round table held in Brasilia in 2010. The Montevideo Declaration and Plan of Action, adopted at the Montevideo meeting, will serve as valuable guidelines for our future cooperation initiatives.

In the Ministerial Declaration issued at the Montevideo meeting, member States renewed their commitments and exchanged views on multiple important issues, such as global governance, development, economic and financial issues, disarmament, peace and security, defence, sustainable development and climate change, oceans and marine resources, and international crime.

The Montevideo Plan of Action contains provisions for a number of themes for cooperation among Member States of the zone, including cooperation on mapping and exploration of the seabed, the protection and preservation of the marine environment, marine scientific research, air and maritime transportation, maritime safety and security, public security and transnational organized crime and capacity-building. We count on the international community to help us to reach those goals.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.64, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", as orally revised.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Saijin Zhang (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in

document A/67/L.64, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Montenegro, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Spain, Togo and Turkey.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.64, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/67/L.64, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 67/266).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position, I would remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the continuing cooperation between States in the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. But the United Kingdom would like to place on record that it strongly disagrees with certain elements of the Montevideo Declaration, including the false claim that the United Kingdom is violating resolution 31/49 through the development of so-called illegitimate hydrocarbon exploration activities in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia Islands, South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and the reinforcement of its military assets in the South Atlantic. In that context, the United Kingdom notes that paragraph 2 of the resolution just adopted takes note of the adoption of the Montevideo Declaration and that it does not therefore express the General Assembly's approval of the content of the Declaration.

The United Kingdom would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its well-known position on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. The United Kingdom has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands or South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas of those territories. The principle of self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations underlies the position of the United Kingdom on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. The Falkland Islanders have the right to self-determination and the right to develop their economy, including developing their natural resources for their own economic benefit. The United Kingdom unequivocally supports that right. The Falkland Islanders have made their views clear in the recent referendum when they voted overwhelmingly in support of retaining their constitutional links with the United Kingdom.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, I would remind delegations that statements made in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): In response to the views expressed by the delegation of the United Kingdom on the question of the Malvinas Islands, the delegation of Argentina categorically reiterates the statements made by the President of Argentina before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on 14 June 2012 and before the General Assembly on 25 September 2012 (see A/67/PV.7).

The Government of Argentina recalls that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas are an integral part of Argentina's national territory and that they are being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They are the subject of a sovereignty dispute between our two countries, which is recognized by various international organizations. The illegal occupation exercised by the United Kingdom led the General Assembly to adopt resolutions 2065 (XX), 3160 (XXVIII), 31/49, 37/9, 38/12, 39/6, 40/21, 41/40, 42/19 and 43/25 — all of which recognize the existence of the sovereignty dispute on the issue of the Malvinas Islands and urges the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute.

For its part, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee has repeatedly made statements to the same end, most recently through the resolution adopted on 14 June 2012. Similarly, on 5 June 2012, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States adopted a new declaration on the issue in similar terms.

Argentina regrets the fact that the Government of the United Kingdom is attempting to distort historical facts with the obvious purpose of concealing the act of

usurpation committed in 1833, which, since the British invasion, has been the subject of constant and repeated protests by Argentina. That distortion also underscores the clear lack of certainty of the United Kingdom with regard to what it considers to be its rights over the Malvinas Islands.

Argentina reiterates that the principle of the self-determination of peoples, which is only basis upon which the United Kingdom is asserting its alleged rights and which is referred to by the United Kingdom exclusively with regard to the Malvinas Islands, is totally and clearly inadmissible and inapplicable to the dispute between the two countries as to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands. The Argentine Republic regrets that the United Kingdom continues to irresponsibly generate expectations among the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands through its comment on the illegal vote, which has not changed, nor will it change, the underlying issue of the Malvinas. Its results have not, nor will they, put an end to the sovereignty dispute nor to the unquestionable rights of Argentina.

Similarly, the Argentine Republic rejects the illegitimate unilateral actions taken by the United Kingdom in the disputed area, which include the development of hydrocarbon, fishing and even military activities, in clear contravention of what has been established by the international community in resolution 31/49.

The Argentine Republic reaffirms its legitimate rights of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of Argentina's national territory.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): In response to the last comment from the representative of Argentina, I would like to make it clear that the United Kingdom defends the Falkland Islanders' right to decide their own future, the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This is a fundamental human right for all peoples.

There are three parties to this debate, not just two as Argentina likes to pretend. The islanders cannot simply be written out of history. As such, there can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless, and until, the islanders so wish. The Argentine Government's public comments denying the Falkland Islanders' existence and declining to meet them face to face, while at the same time calling for discussions, are hypocritical and out of step with the twenty-first century. The United Kingdom has administered the Falkland Islands peacefully and effectively for nearly 180 years. Some of the people on the islands can trace their Falklands ancestry back through nine generations, longer than many South Americans can trace back their own family roots in their countries. We want to have a full and friendly relationship with Argentina, as neighbours in the South Atlantic and as responsible fellow members of the Group of 20. But we will not negotiate away the human and political rights of the people of the Falkland Islands against their will or behind their backs.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to what the representative of the United Kingdom said about the Malvinas Islands, the Argentine delegation would like to reiterate everything that was just said in our previous statement, as well as the statement by the President of Argentina to the Special Committee on Decolonization on 14 June 2012, along with her speech to the General Assembly on 25 September 2012 (see A/67/PV.7). Argentina regrets that the British Government is trying to distort historical facts with the aim of covering up the act of usurpation that occurred in 1833.

As a country committed to human rights, we emphasize that Argentina respects the right to free self-determination. However, the solution to the sovereignty dispute is not dependent upon the result of a vote through which the subjects of the British Crown express their views on their wish to remain British. To allow the British inhabitants of the territory to be the arbiters of a dispute to which their own country is a party distorts the right of peoples to self-determination, because there is no such thing as a people of the Malvinas subject to subjugation, domination or exploitation by a colonial Power.

Argentina would like to recall that the United Nations has clearly set out the way to settle a dispute about sovereignty, which is through renewed negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom while duly taking into account the interests of the inhabitants of the islands and excluding the principle of self-determination in the case of the Malvinas. The Argentine Republic therefore reaffirms its legitimate right of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the

surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of Argentina's national territory.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 42

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/67/814)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.60)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.60.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, we meet to consider the recent evolution of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. It will be recalled that the Commission was established in September 2007, as an innovative effort whereby the State of Guatemala and the United Nations joined forces to fight impunity in my country. Over the years, it has resulted in three General Assembly resolutions, namely, resolutions 63/19, 64/7 and 65/181.

The Commission was set up through Guatemalan legislation, which granted the authority to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to designate a Commissioner. Its activities are financed through Government contributions and the international donor community. Its role has been to strengthen national institutions in the justice and security sectors through the provision of technical assistance and by giving a subsidiary role to the Guatemalan entities involved in criminal prosecution. The Commission is conceived as an interim arrangement, and its functions will be fully absorbed by Guatemala's institutions at the end of its mandate.

In 2010 the Commission's mandate was extended to September of this year. Although important progress has been made in transferring capacity to national institutions, especially the Public Prosecutor's Office, and there has also been progress in introducing legal and institutional reforms aimed at strengthening Guatemalan institutions in the justice and security areas, the Government concluded that in order to consolidate those gains it was important to extend the mandate one last time, until September 2015. Accordingly, in a letter dated 30 November 2012, President Otto Pérez Molina proposed an additional two-year extension to the Secretary-General, who agreed to the proposal in his letter of 15 January. The Secretary-General reports on this extension in his report of 27 March (A/67/814), which is now before the Assembly. As pointed out in the report, the presence of the Commission has had an important qualitative impact on the institutions of the Guatemalan State involved in strengthening the system of justice and the rule of law. A powerful example of that impact was the Court decision of last week condemning an ex-Head of State on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in 1982. Although the sentence could still be appealed, the point to underscore is the freedom, independence and autonomy with which judicial institutions have carried out their work in recent times. In particular, I highlight the fruitful working relationship between the Commission and the Prosecutor's Office, its main national interlocutor.

Both the Government and the United Nations Secretariat have regularly briefed Member States on the progress that has been achieved. The last such meeting took place in New York on 6 September 2012, where my Government's high-level representation included the Vice-President and representatives at the highest level of the other branches of the State, as well as the Commissioner himself, Mr. Francisco Dall'Anese Ruiz. The next update meeting will be held in New York in the coming weeks.

Before concluding, I reiterate the profound gratitude of the Government of Guatemala to the great number of countries among the donor community that have contributed to the maintenance of the Commission through financial and in-kind support. Their solidarity with the Commission has been both generous and persistent.

In conclusion, draft resolution A/67/L.60 which I am introducing to the plenary today, with the support of over 80 sponsors, whom I also wish to thank, seeks to carry forward resolution 65/181 and takes note of the report that the Secretary-General has presented to us. We value the creative partnership established between Guatemala, the United Nations and the donor community, and trust that, at the end of the new extension in the life of the Commission, the institutions of the Guatemalan State will emerge strengthened and

ready to assume the responsibilities of our sovereign and democratic nation.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Area country Norway, member of the European Economic Area; and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me express our appreciation for the important role played by the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). I wish to thank Commissioner Francisco Dall'Anese Ruiz and his team for their tireless dedication in carrying out the mandate of the Commission.

The Commission remains today a positive force in the fight against impunity in Guatemala. Through its highly professional work, the Commission has been able to address the particular challenges facing by the Guatemalan justice system. The aim of the Commission is to support the Guatemalan State institutions in the investigation and prosecution of certain crimes. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all public institutions, as well as society at all levels, fully support the work of the Commission and continue to provide the necessary cooperation.

We have a proven record as a committed and lasting partner in working to consolidate the rule of law in Guatemala. The European Union has provided continuous support to the structural reform processes in the justice and security sectors in Guatemala. The fight against impunity has, of course, always been a priority in those processes. The European Union and its member States have therefore played a crucial role in providing support to CICIG since it began its work, both politically and financially. In financial terms, approximately €11 million have so far been allocated from the European Union budget.

In order to follow up on the recent extension of the Commission's mandate and with the specific aim of supporting both its existing strategy and the effective and sustainable transfer of its capacities to Guatemalan institutions, the European Union is currently in the final stages of approving a final contribution of €4 million.

I wish to reaffirm our support for draft resolution A/67/L.60, before the General Assembly today, which takes note of the progress achieved in various areas of the Commission's mandate and calls on the Government of Guatemala to step up its efforts in combating impunity. While we are fully aware of the need to extend the Commission's mandate until September 2015 — which it is hoped will be the final such period — we remain concerned about the continuing violence and cases of impunity in Guatemala.

Finally, we wish to underscore the important need to provide further assistance to Guatemala in building its State institutions so as to ensure that it has sufficient resources and capacities to take on the tasks that have been performed in recent years by CICIG.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As the current Chair of the Central American Integration System (SICA), I have the honour to address the Assembly on behalf of its member States: Belize, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica.

With this statement, we wish to place on record our support for draft resolution A/67/L.60, introduced by the representative of Guatemala, and to express our solidarity with Guatemala's efforts to strengthen the rule of law and the fight against impunity, and to recognize once again the work carried out by the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG).

We thank the Secretary-General for his letter dated 20 May 2013 (A/67/814) addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which, in accordance with resolution 65/181, he reports on the work of CICIG and on the implementation of that resolution. The letter identifies the significant progress achieved in implementing the mandate of the Commission and on pending issues that require further attention.

The mission of CICIG is directly linked to the situation in Guatemala. However, for States members of SICA its contribution extends beyond Guatemala and has an impact on the entire region. The success it has already achieved, its potential effect in combating transnational organized crime and impunity, and the development of the institutional capacities necessary to shore up its contributions will be critical to the

future not just of Guatemala but of the entire Central American region.

The decision to establish CICIG, which was taken by agreement between Guatemala and United Nations on 12 December 2006 and endorsed by the Guatemalan Congress in August 2007, was a visionary decision of both parties. CICIG is an institutional mechanism without precedent in our hemisphere, through which Guatemala, without ceding its sovereign authority, receives strategic and operational support from the international community in strengthening its judicial system and promoting the work of the Commission created to that end.

The work of CICIG has been key to the investigation and prosecution of several criminal cases and thus in the direct administration of justice. Even more important is its role in the development of far-reaching judiciary and institutional reforms, in strengthening law-enforcement institutions, attorney generals' offices and tribunals, and in fostering a culture of transparency and accountability in several sectors of Guatemalan society.

Moreover, we underscore the commitment of authorities from Guatemala's executive, legislative and judicial branches to the work of the Commission. Their support was made evident on 6 September 2012, when the Vice-President of the Republic, the President of Congress and the President of the Supreme Court of Justice, together with the Attorney General, the Commissioner of CICIG and the Deputy Minister, appeared before that organization to give an account of its work and request an extension of the CICIG mandate for two more years.

The States members of SICA welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to extend that mandate until 3 September 2015. In so doing, we urge the international community to continue to support CICIG and Guatemala, and we reiterate our solidarity with Guatemala's efforts to strengthen the rule of law and combat impunity.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina would like to reiterate and explain its support for the important work carried out by the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). By "important" work, we mean substantive work, transformational work and emancipatory work, because when a Government or an entire society decides to combat impunity, it is opting for freedom, fundamental rights and full respect for human rights. There is no doubt that, through that choice, our brothers and sisters in Guatemala were expressing their desire to create that institution as an essential instrument for cooperative efforts in the strengthening of the rule of law, the justice system and policies that support respect for the human rights of every single individual in their society. That desire expressed is enshrined in draft resolution A/67/L.60, which we here to support today.

We welcome the fact that a country of our region has set an example by deciding to reject all forms of violence, to eradicate all forms of the corrosive force of corruption, to seek out justice and due process and to combat impunity. We believe that the task carried out by the Commission in support of the institutions of the rule of law, which includes investigating acts, activities and criminal groups that have violated and prevented the people of Guatemala from exercising their fundamental rights, is a movement that cannot be stopped. Truly, this is the time to say "never again!"

Argentina itself, on the basis of its own history in the fight to uphold human rights and combat impunity, offers its support to Guatemala whenever necessary on the path of bringing the past to light, in all truth and justice, because those are the only pillars and principles that can heal the pain and humiliation of victims who have had their rights denied by violent, corrupt and cruel powers.

The role of CICIG is twofold. It both participates in prompt and sensitive judicial proceedings and creates institutions based on the ethical principles of the rule of law — life, liberty and dignity — as irrevocable, inalienable and unavoidable principles. Argentina therefore commends the efforts of the Government of Guatemala in shoring up its achievements and overcoming the challenges facing it while being committed to the Commission's goals and working alongside it. We underscore that we will continue to cooperate by providing staff from our country's national police force to protect those seeking true justice — the new face of justice that can be seen in the streets and hopes of the Guatemalan people. We would also like to say that 3 September 2015 will represent not only the extension of the mandate, but also a reiteration, on behalf of Latin America and the Carribean — and on behalf of Guatemala — of our solidarity and our commitment to combating impunity.

Of course, Argentina, which is honoured to sponsor draft resolution A/67/L.60, will also lend it its full support, because it is not merely an administrative document. It is an ethical commitment based on a belief in the importance of the rule of law and a decision that reiterates that democracy is possible only when human rights and international humanitarian law become everyday realities for everyone, without exception or omission.

Mr. Berger (Germany) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Germany firmly supports the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). We believe that it is a vital mechanism to combat the history of corruption and impunity that has caused so much damage to Guatemalan society. The energy and involvement of the CICIG staff have made an important contribution to combating impunity for crimes committed in Guatemala. Until very recently, 98 per cent of denunciations went unpunished.

That situation has changed radically thanks to the joint efforts of CICIG and the Government of Guatemala. However, we also recognize that the work of the Commission would not be possible without the decisive support of the authorities and society of Guatemala, in particular Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey.

One of the main tasks of CICIG is to investigate crimes in cooperation with the authorities. That has led to successful results, including clarification of the murders of seven inmates of the Pavon prison farm, which had shocked the entire country. CICIG has also helped Guatemalan institutions in their legislative work and in improving their judicial renderings. Both tasks are key to strengthening the rule of law, and we trust that Guatemala will pursue those efforts, in particular in professionalizing its police force and its judicial system.

Last week's historic condemnation of the crimes of genocide and war crimes of the former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, to which Ambassador Rosenthal referred earlier, highlights the fact that the judges and prosecutors of that Central American country will no longer tolerate such deficiencies in the judicial system. That notwithstanding, the great work of CICIG have not yet come to an end. Combating impunity in all sectors remains a challenge to the establishment of the rule of law. For that reason, its mandate must again be extended, and my Government supports that decision.

Germany has supported CICIG with some $2.6 million, and provided the advice of German experts who have worked together with the Commission staff. We believe that the strenuous efforts of Guatemalans to combat impunity, violence and the violation of human rights in their own country deserve the decisive support of the international community. We trust that CICIG can continue its work with the support of the Guatemalan Government and the international community in order to benefit the people of Guatemala and its institutions.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): The United States is pleased to support the extension of the mandate of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). This support reflects our deep commitment to help strengthen the rule of law. The United States remains a firm supporter of CICIG efforts to work with Guatemalan authorities to combat impunity. We welcome the progress that has been made to investigate and prosecute individuals engaged in criminal activities. Just as important have been CICIG's programmes to transfer capacity to the Guatemalan Government.

As we look to the final two years of the CICIG mandate, we encourage continued emphasis on enhancing the Guatemalan Government's capacity to reduce the incidence of impunity, reassert State presence in the face of criminality, implement strategies to prevent the reappearance of clandestine organizations operating within State institutions, and disseminate information about the impact of impunity on a democratic society.

In that regard, we welcome steps taken to strengthen institutions in support of the rule of law and the defence of human rights in Guatemala and encourage continued focus in that area to include providing security to judges, prosecutors and witnesses. We also welcome recommendations from CICIG and Guatemalan authorities on steps that will be needed to support a sustainable process after the CICIG mandate ends.

Moving forward, we look to CICIG and to Guatemalan authorities to ensure that its work plan focuses on the final phase of the programme. In addition, the development of benchmarks by CICIG and Guatemala will provide measurable targets on CICIG efforts to transfer its capacity to the Government. These benchmarks and the semi-annual

reporting on the benchmarks will enhance the joint work of the Government of Guatemala and CICIG towards the transition of functions and promote a successful conclusion to the CICIG mandate. Continued collaboration between Guatemala and CICIG authorities is critical for a smooth transfer of capacity and sustainable progress in the combat against impunity in Guatemala.

The United States looks forward to continuing its engagement with Guatemala, CICIG and other donors in support of the endeavour.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/67/L.60 entitled "International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/67/L.60: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Croatia, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iceland, Iraq, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Montenegro, Romania, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Tunisia and the United States of America.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.60?

Draft resolution A/67/L.60 was adopted (resolution 67/267).

The Acting President: May it take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 118 (b) (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

(b) Central role of the United Nations system in global governance

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/769)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 118 (a) in a joint debate in the fifty-seventh plenary meeting on 17 December 2012.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): In a world transformed by globalization, the agenda of all our countries includes global challenges, particularly in international economic relations, that cannot be adequately addressed without actions agreed and implemented by the entire international community. In order to meet that challenge, during the past two sessions of the General Assembly, Chile has had the honour to submit, on behalf of a great number of sponsor countries, resolutions 65/94 and 66/256, both entitled "The United Nations in global governance", for adoption by consensus.

The document "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", prepared by the Secretary-General for the Millennium Summit in 2000, notes that the United Nations was intended to introduce new principles into international relations with

> "the avowed purpose of transforming relations among [S]tates, and the methods by which the world's affairs are managed" (*A/54/2000, para. 9*).

It is true that the world's affairs were transformed by the universal and democratic multilateralism that the Charter introduced into international relations. The inclusive multilateralism promoted and practiced in the United Nations system allows all States, large and small, to make themselves heard by giving voice to their interests before decisions are taken on items on the global agenda.

The aforementioned resolutions, with their broad general objective of addressing the topic of the role of the United Nations in global governance, decided that the matter should be taken up with a more specific focus on one particular area in different years. That is why it was decided to focus on the area of global economic governance and development. In that sphere, the United Nations has had a very large role to play, encompassing, together with the agendas of its specialized agencies, funds and programmes, a very broad spectrum of economic, social and humanitarian issues that would be difficult for others to cover in terms of coordination and collaboration for collective international action.

As we all know, in the midst of the global economic crisis, the Group of 20 (G-20), at the level of Heads of State, tried to coordinate actions to respond to the

crisis. It was a praiseworthy and, at the time, welcome reaction. However, we must face the fact that the activities of the G-20 are also a source of concern because its membership consists of a small number of States. We believe that that is a legitimate concern as a matter of principle, but we also acknowledge that the G-20, composed of a group of countries that are Members of the Organization, has repeatedly stated that it does not wish to ignore the role of the United Nations system and has invited the Secretary-General and some non-member States to its meetings. In addition, the President of the General Assembly has adopted the practice of inviting a representative of the presidency of the G-20 to informal meetings with ministers of members of the General Assembly both before and after its summit meetings.

The Secretary-General has provided a report for today's debate entitled "Global economic governance and development" (A/67/769). In addition, the President of the General Assembly has made an important contribution to the consideration of the topic with useful targeted discussions, for which we are grateful. We would also underscore and express appreciation for the important informal debate organized by the President of the Economic and Social Council on the topic, both debates taking place in the context of the General Assembly agenda item on the central role of the United Nations system in global governance, established by the resolution entitled "The United Nations in global governance".

We also thank the Financing for Development Office for its work in supporting consideration of this agenda item. The Office is familiar with the issue because the systemic aspects of financing for development are an essential issue on the agenda of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development. In that context, global economic governance is considered from the viewpoint of development and of the role to be played by the United Nations.

We welcome the fact that the report starts by seeking to clarify the relevance of the smooth functioning of the international financial, monetary and commercial systems to development processes. That is important if we are to focus on specific actions to improve global economic governance from the development perspective. As a general rule, in the United Nations we should recognize the complexity and diversity of the existing architecture for global economic governance, and we should address the phenomenon of complex multilateralism with various players and capacities at various levels, seeking to safeguard the primacy and centrality of the inclusive multilateralism of the United Nations in all matters related to general guidelines and the setting of standards and systems of universal validity.

The United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, stands out as a political forum for discussion of the major topics on the global economic agenda and as factor for integrating the various viewpoints on sustainable development in their economic, social and environmental dimensions. It also ensures their linkage with issues of international security and peace and human rights.

We also appreciate the report's overview of the way in which the world is structured — its institutions, mechanisms and stakeholders in global economic governance, including consideration of new players, such the G-20. In that context, the report refers to the G-20 and its relations with the United Nations and stresses progress in the complementarity of efforts and the need for such groups as the G-20 to respect the decision-making structures of the organizations and mechanisms of the United Nations system. We naturally approve and support those recommendations that are in line with those promoted by the Global Governance Group.

We trust that important alignments will emerge from this discussion leading to substantial consensus on this year's draft resolution. We underscore the central role of the United Nations system in addressing global challenges and in global economic governance.

We reaffirm United Nations leadership in cooperation for development and in promoting, from the United Nations, a political impetus for the topics of governance of the global commercial and financial system; general approaches that facilitate coordination and complementarity among the various players and mechanisms for global economic governance, including regional and subregional mechanisms; suggestions for improving United Nations coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, among other important stakeholders in the global economy; the design of mechanisms to formalize the progress made in relations between the United Nations and informal groupings of countries that adopt decisions of global scope and effect, including the G-20, recognizing the informal arrangements for interaction

made by the President of the General Assembly; and the promotion of the participation of developing countries in the decision-making and norm-setting mechanisms of the global economy.

My delegation will work to achieve agreement on a new draft resolution on this subject. As in previous years, we will work on the basis of a preliminary text that reflects the main concerns expressed today and in earlier debates on the subject. We hope that, following open-ended consultations, we will be able to arrive at a consensus on a new draft resolution, with a clear vision of our goals and how to achieve them.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States are staunch promoters of effective multilateralism and firm believers in the fundamental role of the United Nations system in global governance. Indeed, the European Union is a prime example of effective multilateralism, and in an increasingly interdependent world there continues to be increasing recognition that no country can solve its own challenges alone. As José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, said at the United Nations last month, today no nation or group of nations can prosper on the wreckage of another. In a globalized, interconnected world we are all neighbours, and no country is big enough to be immune to what happens next door.

For that reason, we welcome the inclusion of this item on the General Assembly's agenda as a result of the adoption of resolution 66/256, and we thank the Secretary-General for his report on global economic governance and development (A/67/769). We believe that it provides an opportunity to deepen reflections within the General Assembly on the ways that the United Nations can play an effective and key role in managing global challenges as a main forum for international cooperation with other relevant international institutions, forums and processes. The European Union and its member States are strong supporters of effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. Strengthening the United Nations, based on effective and sustainable funding in line with real capacity to pay, and increasing the efficiency of its functioning — on which there is scope to do more — are our top priorities.

Global economic governance is definitely a topical subject, considering today's very current issues relating to globalized trade and financial markets and the effects of globalization and the economic and financial crisis. We agree that global economic governance is an essential element in achieving the purposes of the United Nations itself, especially those set out in paragraph 3 of Article 1 of the Charter and other major United Nations documents, such as the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), and we remain ready to contribute actively to a debate on that subject.

One of the main purposes of this reflection, which is highlighted in the Secretary-General's report as a challenge of the highest priority, would be the implementation of the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288), and the strengthening of the institutional framework for sustainable development. We should remain ready to identify ways to enhance the central role of the United Nations in achieving its broad development agenda, which encompasses every aspect of sustainable development, as well as human rights and the relationship between development, security, conflict and country fragility.

Those principles must also apply to the United Nations system itself, including in the framework of the delivering as one initiative, so that it delivers aid more coherently and effectively in support of national plans and priorities at the country level, building on the commitment of Member States, underlined in last year's quadrennial comprehensive policy review, to enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and credibility of the United Nations system as a shared goal and interest.

In recent years, in a process actively supported by the EU and its member States, the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in global economic governance has been strengthened. We will keep working with a view to continuing the

dynamic process aimed at enhancing the voice and representation of emerging markets and developing countries, including least-developed countries, in international institutions. The global economic and financial crisis demonstrated that working collectively through multilateral institutions and international forums is crucial to addressing the challenges of an increasingly interdependent world. Gathering almost every country in the world together, the United Nations is unquestionably the most universal global forum. However, other multilateral institutions and intergovernmental forums, such as the World Bank, the IMF, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Trade Organization and the Group of 20 (G-20), as well as civil society and the private sector, play important complementary roles.

In our view, what is required in order to increase United Nations effectiveness in global economic governance is more coherence and cooperation, as well as making the best possible use of the competitive advantages of existing institutions and forums and their complementarity. Coherence must be ensured across various United Nations intergovernmental processes, including those related to sustainable development, the post-2015 development agenda and financing for development. That is one of the main conclusions of the Secretary-General's report, and we would support more work in that regard.

The global financial crisis was a watershed in global economic governance. The European Union was one of the first key actors to recognize that it required a globally coordinated response, and therefore proposed meetings of the G-20 at the level of leaders. A new forum was needed to bring together advanced economies and emerging markets. As President Barroso highlighted in the statement I referred to earlier, the importance of the G-20 in the response to the global and economic crisis of 2008 is clear. The G-20 has proved to be a very effective forum for coordinating a global response and thus avoiding the mistakes that were made in the economic crisis of the 1930s. We welcome the need for consistent engagement between the G-20 and the United Nations, an issue that is also fully recognized in the Secretary-General's report. In that regard, we welcome the outreach efforts to the United Nations and its membership that successive G-20 hosts have made, and hope to see the practice continue, including by finding ways to bring the United Nations system's technical expertise to bear on its work.

In our view, the key issue for global economic governance is to strike the right balance between legitimacy and effectiveness. With that principle in mind, we should continue to strive for better coherence. Let me conclude by reiterating that the European Union and its member States are looking forward to contributing actively to the upcoming deliberations of the General Assembly on global economic governance and development, and the way in which the United Nations can play an effective and key role in meeting global challenges.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 118.

Before adjourning, I wish to announce that this will be the last meeting of the General Assembly for Ms. Sahar Wanly, Senior Conference Officer, Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management. Ms. Wanly has been with the United Nations for 31 years, a majority of which have been associated with the work of the plenary of the General Assembly. Her contribution to the smooth running of our meetings has been truly significant, and I would like the Assembly to give her a round of applause in appreciation. We wish her all the best.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/67/PV.83

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-seventh session

83rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 21 May 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: The Assembly now has before it a report of the Fifth Committee on sub-item (b) of agenda item 111, entitled "Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments: appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions" (A/67/560/Add.1). In order for the Assembly to consider the report of the Fifth Committee under the sub-item, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 111.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 111 and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/67/560/Add.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the report of the Fifth Committee under this sub-item, entitled "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions" (A/67/560/Add.1). In paragraph 3 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Thomas David Smith of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 21 May 2013 and ending on 31 December 2014.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Thomas David Smith as a member of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 21 May 2013 and ending on 31 December 2014?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-34139 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

United Nations A/67/PV.84

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

84th plenary meeting
Monday, 10 June 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: In order for the Assembly to consider the report of the Fifth Committee under the sub-items, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of subitems (d) and (h) of agenda item 111.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-items (d) and (h) of agenda item 111 and proceed immediately to their consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(d) Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/67/562/Add.1)

The Acting President: In paragraph 3 of its report contained in document A/67/562/Add.1, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Larbi Djacta of Algeria as a member of the International Civil Service Commission for a term of office beginning on 10 June 2013 and ending on 31 December 2016.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Larbi Djacta of Algeria as a member of the International Civil Service Commission for a term of office beginning on 10 June 2013 and ending on 31 December 2016?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

(h) Confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Note by the Secretary-General (A/67/862)

The Acting President: In paragraph 2 of his note contained in document A/67/862, the Secretary-General, pursuant to paragraph 27 of section II, of General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) of 30 December 1964, proposes to appoint Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi of Kenya as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a term of office of four years, beginning on 1 September 2013 and ending on 31 August 2017.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to confirm the appointment of Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi of Kenya as

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-35763 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for a term of office of four years, beginning on 1 September 2013 and ending on 31 August 2017?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 11

Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822)

Draft decision (A/67/L.69)

The Acting President: Before proceeding further, I should like to inform members that action on draft decision A/67/L.69 has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

I will now deliver a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

"This year's meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress made in the global AIDS response is of significant importance. It comes at a critical juncture, as the international community accelerates the push to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and embarks on deliberations to define a new, universal development agenda for the post-2015 era.

"I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this subject (A/67/822). The report clearly demonstrates that the world is making unprecedented progress towards the ambitious targets unanimously agreed by Member States in the 2011 Political Declaration (resolution 65/277).

"Our momentum has rarely felt as strong as it does now. The rate of new HIV infections and AIDS-related mortality have continued to decline. For the first time, there are more people living with HIV who are accessing life-saving treatment, at 54 per cent, than those without it. Fewer infants are born with HIV, reinforcing our push for an AIDS-free generation. And recent scientific breakthroughs give us confidence that with sustained political and financial commitment, we can one day overcome this epidemic.

"We can truly feel proud of this progress. It has been brought about by commitment and investments, in resources and effort, by all stakeholders. We need to maintain this momentum.

"Notwithstanding the strides made in addressing the scourge of HIV and AIDS, more challenges remain. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the AIDS pandemic is far from over. Over 2.5 million people are newly infected with HIV, almost half of people in need of HIV treatment still do not have access and new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are still rising in some parts of the world.

"Of further concern is that key populations which are at higher risk of HIV infection are largely left behind and often criminalized. The stigma and discrimination that fuel the spread of the virus are still rampant across the world.

"With less than 1,000 days left to address these challenges in order to reach the goals of the 2011 Political Declaration, I call on all stakeholders to accelerate and scale up their efforts in this regard.

"I would like to encourage Member States to utilize this review as a bridge towards the upcoming high-level event on MDGs by looking for ways that will help strengthen the synergies between the AIDS response and other MDGs. By leveraging the AIDS response as an engine to advance progress towards the other MDGs and broader social and economic development, we can maximize the impact of scarce resources and promote sustainable development for the post-2015 era.

"I welcome the recommendation in the Secretary-General's High-level Panel Report to include HIV/AIDS in the post-2015 development framework. For the road ahead, to 2015 and beyond, we must uphold our commitment to universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by making sure that no one is criminalized, excluded or left behind.

"Working together, we can do more. Let us be bold in pursuing our vision of a world with zero new infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero stigma and discrimination."

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to address the Assembly at this important meeting on the progress in our global struggle against AIDS. I thank Mr. Michel Sidibé for his excellent leadership at the helm of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). I applaud the engagement of Governments and especially commend all the representatives from civil society who have done so much to advance this cause.

Today's review is taking place almost halfway to the target date set by the 2011 Political Declaration. We have made important progress to turn the tide of the HIV epidemic. We are paving the way to achieve an AIDS-free generation.

Overall, we have reached the Millennium Development Goal to halt and reverse the spread of AIDS by 2015. But we must do more for individual countries and communities, and we need additional funding to fully realize our vision.

In more than 56 States, we have stabilized the epidemic and reversed the rate of new infections. Globally, new HIV infections have declined by one fifth since 2001. Treatment now reaches more than half of all those who need it in low- and middle-income countries.

Now we have to expand antiretroviral therapy. That is a human rights imperative and a public-health necessity. Treatment prevents sickness, saves lives and eases the economic hardship that can cripple whole communities. We have brought the cost of many medicines down dramatically. We must continue to push hard for greater results.

Women and girls are still at an unacceptably high risk of HIV. Every minute a young woman is infected. Children's access to HIV treatment remains particularly low; fewer than one third of children living with HIV receive the treatment they need.

I continue to be disturbed by the widespread stigma, discrimination, gender-based violence and punitive laws against people living with HIV as well as those at high risk of infection. The problem cannot be solved with more money. We all have to step up with courage and integrity to protect the vulnerable members of our human family. Some 45 countries and territories continue to deny entry, stay and residence to people living with HIV. I call on them to repeal those discriminatory laws.

There is not enough funding for programmes to help key populations, including sex workers, men who have sex with men and people who use drugs. I urge that more resources be allocated for such life-saving initiatives.

I call for efforts across society to eliminate the stigma and discrimination that surround HIV. Many Governments and community leaders still have laws and policies that criminalize key populations and force them underground. That is discriminatory and counterproductive. It drives people away from information, testing, treatment, care and support services. I have consistently said that human rights are universal and must be universally respected.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the drafting of the Denver Principles, which became the Bill of Rights for people living with HIV and led to the International Patient's Bill of Rights. We should remember the cry of the first activists against AIDS, who said: "Nothing for us without us". People affected by HIV must be engaged and empowered on the decisions that affect them.

The General Assembly's 2011 Political Declaration set out a new framework of shared responsibility and global solidarity. Since then, we have moved closer to our goal of no new HIV infections, no discrimination and no AIDS-related deaths. We must move from treating millions with the disease to giving billions the opportunity to live healthy lives. The HIV response can help to build stronger, integrated health-care systems that respond to broad needs across society.

As the world shapes a post-2015 development agenda, we can draw important lessons from the global AIDS response. We can take inspiration from the activists, health workers, fundraisers, diplomats and ministers — the General Assembly and all present here.

Now let us rise to the many serious challenges that remain to get the job done. UNAIDS asked a number of people living with HIV for their message to the world. One young mother said, "If you take care of yourself today, you will avoid having to take care of things tomorrow".

Let us press forward now so that we can realize an AIDS-free world.

The Acting President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Before proceeding further, I should like to welcome, on behalf of the Assembly, Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, the new Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, and to wish him all the best.

I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group thanks the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822) and takes note of its recommendations, as expressed in our letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

Let me join you, Mr. President, in expressing our distinct pleasure and happiness at seeing seated next to Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, the new Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Services. He is an exemplary international civil servant, and we wish him the best.

I wish also to recognize the presence in our midst of the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Mr. Michel Sidibé, whose diligence and commitment have without a doubt surpassed all of our expectations. He is doing an incredibly wonderful job, and we thank him for his relentless efforts to improve the plight of those affected.

Today we are gathered here to assess the implementation of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS, which provides us with a road map towards a vision of no new HIV infections, no discrimination and no more AIDS-related deaths; to reduce by 50 per cent new infections from sexual transmission and from risky behaviours, such as among injecting drug users; to substantially increase funding; and to meet the needs of women and girls.

Africa's commitment to addressing HIV/AIDS remains unwavering. As a reflection of that commitment, Africa continues to put in place initiatives aimed at accelerating progress in the continent's HIV/AIDS response efforts. These include the African Union road map on shared responsibility and global solidarity for AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis adopted by our Heads of State and Government in 2012, whose progress is being assessed by the Action Committee of Heads of State and Government of AIDS Watch Africa. The road map established a response plan to improve health governance, diversify financing and accelerate access to affordable, high-quality medicines.

In addition, at the recent African Union (AU) Summit, in recognition of the international community's role in the AIDS response, the first thematic accountability report on the AU-Group of Eight partnership, entitled "Delivering Results Towards Ending AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Africa", was launched to encourage further AU and Group of Eight (G-8) commitments. The report calls on both AU member States and members of the G-8 to exercise greater leadership, particularly on access to medicines, sustainable financing, human rights and gender equality.

The Secretary-General's report suggests the need for shared responsibility and increased domestic investment in scaling up the treatment of HIV and AIDS. We therefore call on our partners to fully fulfil their commitments towards the fight against the endemic so that gains achieved on prevention and treatment are sustained. They should continue to increase their contributions in order to close the funding gap.

Regarding that endeavour, we also recall the African leaders' commitment made in June 2006, in Abuja, Nigeria, when they declared 2010 the year of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for the African continent. They also committed to allocate 15 per cent of their national budgets to health, mobilizing human, material and financial resources for prevention, care, treatment and support to deal with the epidemic and other infectious diseases.

Since then significant strides have been made in combating HIV and AIDS. In recent years Africa and its partners have made considerable progress in creating awareness and in mitigating the pandemic amongst its population. Africa has also made significant progress in providing universal access to health services in general and to HIV and AIDS in particular.

The rate of new infections has declined or stabilized in many African States, and AIDS-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa have fallen by one third compared

to the past six years as treatment coverage is improving. Coverage and prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission increased across Africa from 15 per cent in 2005 to 54 per cent in 2009, and numerous behavioural indicators, including delayed sexual activity, a decline in the number of multiple sexual partners and increased condom use, are indicative of favourable trends.

In that regard, the African Group reaffirms the central role of the family and takes the different cultural, religious and ethical factors into account in reducing the vulnerability of children and young people. It does that by ensuring that primary and secondary education is accessible to boys and girls, HIV and AIDS are included in the curricula for adolescents, by ensuring a safe and secure environments, especially for young girls, by expanding good-quality youth-friendly information, sexual health education and counselling services, as well as by strengthening sexual and reproductive health programmes.

The campaign to combat AIDS is still suffering from a serious shortfall in resources and from the stigma and discrimination attached to it. Access to HIV treatment in sub-Saharan Africa reaches 56 per cent of those affected. In that connection, the African Group is deeply concerned by the fact that funding devoted to HIV and AIDS responses is still not proportionate to the magnitude of the epidemic, either nationally or internationally, and that the ongoing global financial and economic crisis continues to negatively impact the HIV and AIDS response at all levels.

We would therefore welcome the increased available resources that would result from the establishment of timetables by many developed countries, aimed at achieving a target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance by 2015. We also want to stress the importance of complementary innovative sources of financing, in addition to traditional funding, including official development assistance, to support national strategies, financing plans and multilateral efforts to combat HIV and AIDS.

The African Group underscores the vital importance of guaranteeing access to affordable treatments, vaccines, medicines, traditional medicine and indigenous knowledge, and of prioritizing the search for solutions that would have the pharmaceutical industry license the production of HIV medicines to generic companies in the developing world. That would be done through greater coordination efforts with the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, so as to ensure that intellectual property rights do not hinder access to affordable medicines and slow access to the next generation of treatment, medicines and vaccines. At the same time, appropriate legislation and international trade regulations should be enacted and utilized to ensure that prices for medicines and commodities are affordable. The same applies to technologies for HIV treatment, care and prevention technologies, including vaccines, medicines and antiretroviral therapy.

The African Group also urges developed countries to support the strengthening of health systems in developing countries by implementing the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, as a chronic shortage of health workers in developing countries is hampering efforts to combat HIV and AIDS. The African Group welcomes medical research development and technological initiatives that ensure that HIV and AIDS treatment is accessible, affordable to all and of excellent quality. We believe that the target of giving HIV treatment to 15 million people set by the Secretary-General is achievable only if the significant current gains in HIV prevention and antiretroviral treatment are sustained. For our part, we are strengthening HIV treatment so as to prevent mother-to-child transmission. We therefore ask the international community to help in creating an enabling environment, one that includes reviewing policies that will foster generic competition to reduce drug prices.

Finally, we want to re-emphasize our commitment and determination to work towards an AIDS-free generation, an imperative for sustainable development. That is a paramount objective that transcends Governments. Together, leaders on the continent, professionals, the private sector, civil society, people living with HIV, the young and the old must all work together to prevent new infections, which continue to outpace the number of people starting treatment.

Let us intensify our efforts to provide all women and children at risk of HIV with the requisite services. A clear political will and commitment exists across the continent and internationally for achieving universal access and the health-related Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Mr. Gaspard (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at this important meeting to consider the implementation of both the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2, annex) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex). In that regard, CARICOM thanks the Secretary-General for his latest report on the subject (A/67/822).

CARICOM accords the highest priority to achieving the best strategies to implement the framework for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The region's response to the issue continues to be led by the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), established in 2001 by the CARICOM Heads of Government.

Regional authorities have also endorsed the need for closer collaboration between the newly established Caribbean Public Health Agency and PANCAP to strengthen regional efforts to achieve the targets set in relation to the global problem. Our multisectoral response involves close collaboration between the aforementioned agencies and the regional councils of trade, finance and foreign and community relations, as well as with the education, health, youth, culture and sport sectors in the region. Additionally, our regional response involves work done in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and a number of other development partners.

According to the 2012 UNAIDS Global Report, the Caribbean remains one of the regions most affected by HIV and AIDS. However, it is important to note that steady progress continues to be made through efforts to achieve a number of the targets identified in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In particular, those include a sharp decline in new infections in the region since 2001, a significant decrease in mortality from HIV/AIDS-related causes between 2005 and 2011 and a reduction in the mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

At the most recent high-level regional meeting on AIDS, held in 2011, a number of targets were set. The region has made notable progress in achieving the new targets, although a number of challenges remain. For example, a number of regional and country-level activities are aimed at changing sexual behaviour. We share the view that this is fundamental if we are to achieve the target of reducing the sexual transmission of the disease by 50 per cent by 2015. In that regard, emphasis is placed on raising the age of sexual initiation, reducing the number of sexual encounters with multiple partners and increasing condom use.

Efforts are also under way to educate youth and women, including girls, to enable them to make informed decisions about sexual behaviour, as well as to provide access — as appropriate — to sexual and reproductive health care.

A high-level regional meeting on strategic HIV investment and sustainable financing was held in Kingston, Jamaica, from 29 to 30 May, with the aim of improving efficiency in HIV/AIDS programme delivery and the relocation of resources throughout the region.

CARICOM has also advanced significantly with respect to eliminating new HIV infections in children and in reducing AIDS-related maternal deaths. In that area, initiatives under way are based on four key actions, similar to those of the Global Plan Towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections among Children by 2015 and Keeping Their Mothers Alive. Those are: strengthening HIV prevention services for women of reproductive age and their partners; strengthening family planning among women living with HIV; providing timely HIV testing, counseling and antiretroviral therapy to pregnant women living with HIV; and delivering HIV treatment and support to women and children living with HIV and their families.

According to data contained in the UNAIDS 2012 Global Report, some CARICOM countries can claim the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, while others are making considerable progress in achieving the same.

While there have been a number of challenges in many countries in testing all patients with tuberculosis for HIV and AIDS, there has been an overall reduction in deaths related to co-infections. Nonetheless, increased monitoring is necessary in the region in order to achieve the target.

CARICOM has made significant progress in the expansion of HIV care and treatment services for people living with HIV. It is estimated that 70 per cent of people living with HIV currently receive antiretroviral coverage. Efforts are being undertaken to increase coverage to 80 per cent by 2015. CARICOM would point

out at this juncture that access to funding and support plays a critical role in sustaining and improving such activity within our region.

Additionally, as early as in 2005, the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development considered model legislation designed to protect the rights of women and girls in several broad areas, including gender-based abuse, domestic violence, sexual harassment and equal remuneration for work of equal value. In various countries, legislation to improve gender equality and to protect women and girls from violence has also been enacted.

There are also a number of initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting women and girls from violence and providing appropriate services for victims of violence. However, given the current epidemiological trends that reveal an increase in HIV among women and, particularly, girls, there is a need for continued and increased attention to the link between gender equality and its impact on HIV in women and girls and their needs in that context.

CARICOM Governments strive to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens in accordance with their obligations under the international instruments to which States are parties, as well as national laws. In that regard, States seek to ensure the elimination of stigma and discrimination related to the HIV response through various initiatives and will continue to strengthen their work in that area.

CARICOM also believes that there is a critical need to strengthen the integration of the AIDS response and the systems providing HIV-related services. Much greater emphasis should be placed on addressing the issue comprehensively within the broader context of health, and in terms of the problem of co-infections, in particular.

Furthermore, we wish to highlight that more people living with HIV are developing and dying from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which pose considerable challenges to the social and economic development of our small island states; the situation is further complicated when linked to people living with HIV. We therefore reiterate our call to consider the issue of NCDs in the post-2015 development agenda in terms of health-related goals.

Moreover, we further underscore that it is imperative to undertake all efforts to ensure that the gains made to date are not reversed, as further progress will be difficult without the requisite resources and sustainable financing. While some financing has been secured, including grants and loans, CARICOM countries continue to be affected by the limitations affecting middle-income countries seeking sufficient assistance owing to their income-level designation.

CARICOM therefore calls for the reversal of such conditions so as to enable access by middle-income countries to the resources and assistance, including technical assistance, required to ensure continued regional progress in addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS. Thus people living with HIV in our countries would benefit from further reductions in the cost of antiretroviral drugs that can be achieved through the flexibility of the marketplace and trade.

In conclusion, CARICOM wishes to commend UNAIDS for its leadership role in coordinating AIDS policy and its support to countries. We also wish to express our thanks to all our partners for their help, which has contributed greatly to our response to the problem. Our region remains fully committed to continuing to work with the international community so as to achieve together the targets we have set for ourselves with regard to the Millennium Development Goals, including those related to HIV/AIDS, as well as those we have committed to in the Declaration of Commitment and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country, Mozambique. The members of SADC take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration", contained in document A/67/822, and align themselves with the statement just delivered by the Permanent Representative of Djibouti on behalf of the Group of African States.

As the SADC region is one of those hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, its member States have made scaling up the AIDS response a regional priority. They have demonstrated their commitment to addressing that challenge by adopting, among other instruments,

the SADC Protocol on Health, the Maseru Declaration on the Fight against HIV/AIDS in the SADC Region and the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework. The region's response to the HIV pandemic has also been addressed in other relevant documents that are being implemented at the regional and national levels.

The SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework is a multidimensional response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic on the part of the region, with provisions aligned with SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. It was developed to intensify measures and actions aimed at addressing the pandemic's devastating and pervasive impact in a comprehensive and complementary way. Among other things, it commits member States to reducing the incidence of infections among the most vulnerable populations, mitigating the social impact of the disease, reviewing and harmonizing their policies and legislation relating to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, and mobilizing and coordinating resources for a multisectoral approach to the challenge. The plan has since been updated and HIV/AIDS is a standing agenda item at the SADC summits of heads of State and Government.

In line with the Strategic Framework, the region continues to implement a number of interventions, including condom promotion and distribution; behaviour-change communication; HIV testing and counselling; safe medical circumcision; mainstreaming HIV and AIDS across all sectors; the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and treatment and home-based care. A number of programmes have been undertaken by member States and partners under the Framework. One such is the Southern Africa Regional Programme on Access to Medicines and Diagnostics, aimed at promoting a more efficient and competitive market for essential medicines in the SADC region. Among other things, it supports the SADC pharmaceutical programme and helps build member States' capacity for pharmaceutical policy reform. Further to the policy framework established to guide the regional HIV response, SADC members have established a dedicated HIV and AIDS unit within the SADC secretariat.

One of the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development mandates member States to address gender-specific health-care needs related to HIV and AIDS. Universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment for all who are infected, men and women, has been given priority. Most member States have developed national policies on HIV and AIDS or national strategic plans.

SADC member States recognize that with sufficient commitment and investment in human and financial resources, the pandemic can be curbed and that collaboration on various socioeconomic improvements can help fight poverty, uphold human rights and combat stigmatization. Indeed, through deliberate cooperation at the regional level and implementation of policies at the national level, SADC members have been witnessing the positive impacts of targeted measures in key areas such as prevention of the disease and care, treatment and support for those infected or affected by it.

The implementation of programmes at the national and regional levels has also shown signs of having a positive impact on helping to prevent HIV/AIDS among young people. All SADC member States are addressing HIV and AIDS through multisectoral national responses. Most have adopted responses that address key areas, such as better implementation of interventions; prevention of infection; care, treatment and support of those infected or affected; and mitigation of the disease's socioeconomic impact.

The main goal of such national and regional efforts is to reduce the number of people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS in the SADC region, so as to ensure that HIV/AIDS is no longer a threat to public health and the socioeconomic development of member States. In order to achieve that, SADC member States recognize the importance of strengthening partnerships with various development and financing institutions, as well as of enhancing the technical support needed to meet the commitments we have made to reaching universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support. In that regard, SADC leaders joined with global partners in March to launch an initiative on accelerated action on tuberculosis and HIV for the period remaining between now and the deadline for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic on social, political and economic development remains one of the greatest challenges facing SADC member States. The region has one of the highest HIV infection levels in the world. Many countries are still grappling with the severe impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemics and the related epidemic of tuberculosis, which together threaten to reverse the hard-won development

gains of the past few years. Despite the progress made, the following areas still require SADC member States' urgent attention and action: HIV and AIDS prevention and social mobilization; the improvement of care and access to counselling and testing services, treatment and support; the acceleration of development and the mitigation of the impact of HIV and AIDS; the intensification of resource mobilization; and the strengthening of institutional, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

I would like to conclude by once again emphasizing the commitment of all SADC member States to continuing to work with their development partners with the goal of full implementation of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex).

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Poulsen (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

We would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/67/822) on the excellent progress being made towards achieving the targets of the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex) adopted in 2011 by the General Assembly and towards intensifying our efforts to eliminate HIV and AIDS. We appreciate the review of the progress achieved in meeting the 10 specified and timebound targets by 2015 and the challenges remaining. We would like to stress that we consider the report to be well balanced and that it takes into consideration the specificities of different regions.

We are particularly pleased to note the reduction in new infections and the increase in the number of people with access to treatment, but are concerned by the high level of stigmatization and discrimination. In that regard, the European Union is committed to upholding human rights, an effort that is underpinned by the common EU values of solidarity and equitable and universal coverage of quality health services. In its relationships and agreements with third countries, the European Union pays particular attention to rights-based programmes to address the specific needs of key populations.

With respect to the AIDS resource gap, we welcome increased national funding and emphasize the need to further strengthen country ownership, while supporting a broader donor base. To that end, we encourage others, such as the private sector and emerging donors, to continue to increase their contributions in line with their increasingly important role in the global economy. As demonstrated by the International Drug Purchasing Facility, also known as UNITAID, innovative financing can also be a valuable contribution.

The European Commission has been associated with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria since it was founded 12 years ago in 2001. Since then, the Commission has contributed more than €1.1 billion to the Fund. Collectively, the EU and its member States have so far contributed 55 per cent of the Global Fund's budget. In future, the Global Fund will remain an important EU instrument for the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in developing countries.

With regard to the allocation of resources, the EU stance is to align its resources with the priorities identified in countries' national plans and to discuss and agree on strategic options with country representatives and stakeholders. That policy dialogue is also key to providing adequate support to efforts to strengthen health systems in the delivery of integrated health services, in particular, through comprehensive primary health care.

Notwithstanding past support for the Global Fund, it is now too early to determine the level of future contributions. However, we can assure the Assembly that the Global Fund will remain a central instrument for the EU to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in developing countries.

Civil society organizations are an integral and crucial part of the health and AIDS landscape and, as such, should, where necessary, be supported in their efforts to advocate for adequate services. Such support is critical when the provision of public funds for the fight against HIV is not sufficient or when policies on drugs and rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and other key vulnerable population groups are inadequate.

Finally, we would like to note that we need to address the unmet challenges related to the current health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and embrace new global health challenges, including non-communicable diseases and universal health coverage, in the elaboration of the post-2015

framework. While important progress has been made on the health-related MDGs, namely, MDG 4, MDG 5 and MDG 6, on a global basis, we need to work on progressively reducing inequalities. That includes access to prevention, treatment and care for those in need. Inequalities should be addressed by setting policy priorities, allocating resources according to needs and through strengthening health systems to make them responsive and capable of delivering comprehensive high-quality health services for the entire population. Universal health coverage and access to comprehensive quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health, constitutes a specific contribution to achieving the broader goal of sustainable well-being.

Mr. Maksimychev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is wedded to the purposes and principles of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex) and considers it to be a key framework basis for bolstering international cooperation in combating the immunodeficiency virus. On the whole, we agree with the progress assessment contained in the report (A/67/822) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the bold agenda agreed by Member States in combating the epidemic. We back most of the report's recommendations aimed at achieving maximum impact from comprehensive HIV/AIDS response measures.

In our country, the basis for the State policy and strategy in the field was determined by the federal law on the prevention in the Russian Federation of illnesses caused by HIV, which guarantees universal access for citizens to full-fledged and comprehensive services and social assistance for HIV-infected individuals and, naturally, the protection of their rights.

Within the framework of the priority national project entitled "Health", a comprehensive system for countering HIV/AIDS in Russia is being implemented. It has enabled us to constrain the epidemic in a concentrated phase. The Russian Federation provides free care and treatment to HIV-infected persons with the use of the latest drugs in required doses.

In 2012, over $600 million was allocated in the federal budget to actions related to the testing, detection and cure of HIV/AIDS. A similar amount is planned for this year. The priority in countering HIV/AIDS in our country remains the development of a cross-cutting programme of primary care and the encouragement of healthy lifestyles, i.e. pushing people to consciously reject risky behaviour. Special attention is devoted to measures aimed at preventing vertical transmission from mother to child, as well as to HIV prevention among high-risk groups of the population.

Every year, voluntary HIV testing of groups at high risk for HIV infection covers 22 to 25 million individuals, that is, 15 to 17 per cent of the population of our country. That enables us, on the one hand, to ensure the introduction of a system for recording HIV-infected individuals and so to plan the necessary forms and amounts of assistance needed, and on the other hand, to detect HIV infection at an early stage. Active cooperation is being developed with civic and non-governmental organizations working to counter HIV infection in the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to broadening the efforts of the international community to combat HIV/AIDS. Since 2006, our country has contributed to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and has been expanding its assistance. For that period, Russia's contributions to the Fund amounted to over $317 million. The Government of the Russian Federation has adopted a decision to disburse an earmarked contribution to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, known as UNAIDS, of $16.5 million for 2012-2014 and to provide technical support to laboratories working to diagnose infectious diseases in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the amount of approximately $7.6 million for the period 2013-2015.

Our experience of cooperation within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States has shown that interaction at the regional and subregional levels, where infectious diseases have similar characteristics, plays an important part in combating the epidemic. In that regard, Russia is expanding its technical, financial and organizational cooperation with countries in the region to combat AIDS.

As is well known, one of the main causes for the spread of HIV, including in Russia, is drug abuse. The main channel for the transmission among drug abusers is unsterilized needles. We are exploring the use of the so-called harm-reduction concept and substitution therapy to deal with the problem, the cornerstone of which is to substitute soft drugs for hard drugs within a free syringe distribution programme.

We are convinced that a scientific approach to the issue of the disease and drug treatment is incompatible

with any legalization of those narcotics. Providing drug abusers with medical and social assistance should be in line with the three United Nations framework counter-narcotics conventions. Despite the significant successes in the past few years in combating HIV/AIDS, the disease, as shown by the Secretary-General's report (A/67/822), remains one of the most serious challenges of today. We are convinced that it is only through joint efforts at all levels, based on political will and backed by concrete action, that we will promote further progress in holding back the spread of the HIV infection and reducing the mortality rate of the disease.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): At the outset, allow me to join other delegations in thanking the President for convening this meeting. Botswana welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review by the General Assembly of the draft decision entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS" (A/67/L.69).

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822), which is the basis for our discussion today, as well as his continued commitment and devoted attention to women's and children's health, the elimination of violence against women and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

We would also like to thank the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for its tireless efforts in the implementation of its mandate regarding accelerated, comprehensive and coordinated global action on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In that regard, Botswana welcomes the progress achieved by the Joint Programme since its establishment in 1994 and in particular its continued efforts in advocating for greater political commitment in responses to the epidemic at the national and global levels, including the mobilization and allocation of adequate resources for the HIV/AIDS response.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti on behalf of the Group of African States and the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Mozambique on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

HIV/AIDS continues to be one of the greatest challenges of our time and one that poses significant challenges to the socioeconomic development and well-being of our societies. As the Secretary-General clearly states in his report, the AIDS epidemic is far from being over. In that regard, today's review of the implementation of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS is therefore crucial for renewing our shared commitment to the AIDS response and for charting the way forward. The review is therefore not only timely but also relevant in the context of the ongoing intergovernmental processes, including the follow-up to efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2013 and the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, the global AIDS response has come a long way. Much has been achieved, while much more remains to be done. We welcome and are also encouraged by progress made by many countries, including scaling up access to HIV treatment, which resulted in the increase in the number of people receiving therapy, the expansion of access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission services, reductions in new infections, as well as programmes and interventions that promote, for instance, HIV testing, consistent and regular condom use and many others. Those interventions have indeed borne notable fruit in many ways.

It is on account of those achievements that we believe that the vision of getting to zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths for an AIDS-free generation is achievable. However, the harsh reality is that even with such marked improvements in many countries, more remains to be done. The world should therefore not be lulled into complacency by some of the seemingly impressive results.

The achievement of the targets in the 2006 and 2011 Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277) will require concerted efforts by the international community in its quest to turn the AIDS epidemic around. In that connection, Botswana shares the view that the international community must redouble its efforts to build on the gains made so far and to step up efforts to address barriers that continue to undermine effective responses to the epidemic, such as complex issues relating to laws and policies, access to services by all, and the elimination of stigmatization and discrimination in all its forms.

We also recognize that committed and visionary leadership is essential in order to reverse the epidemic. In addition, the strengthening and integration of health

systems, the use of scientific advances and the continued implementation of best practices are critical in order to make that happen. Predictable and sustainable funding for the HIV/AIDS response also remains critical for a sustained global response. That therefore requires the commitment of all in order to sustain the progress achieved in the past 30 years.

In that regard, we are pleased to note that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has launched a new funding model that will accord priority to assistance to the most heavily affected countries and will focus funding on interventions that will have the greatest health impact. We therefore look forward to the convening of the public and private donors meeting in September 2013 to replenish funding for the Global Fund for the period 2014-2016.

It is evident that HIV/AIDS will remain a global challenge well beyond 2015. For that reason, we believe that the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda provide an opportunity for ensuring that HIV/AIDS remains a top priority. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the need for the completion of the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustained attention to the AIDS response post-2015. In our view, the post-2015 agenda should build on the MDGs, of which Goal 6, as the Assembly knows, is focused on the HIV/AIDS response. The new framework should therefore clearly reflect the role of an effective AIDS response as an essential pillar of future health and development efforts.

In complementing today's review, Botswana and Norway, in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, have organized a side event, to be held tomorrow, aimed at reinforcing the commitment to urgently scale up efforts to meet the targets set out in the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS in order to accelerate progress towards the achievement of MDG 6 by 2015, as well as foster support for AIDS as an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming the importance that Botswana attaches to the fight against HIV/AIDS and to the realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. We remain committed to the implementation of the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS, and central to our efforts, we also commit to ensuring respect for human rights and access to prevention, treatment, care and support services to the affected populations, including those at risk. However, we can achieve this only with the continued support and assistance of the international community.

Mr. Golitsyn (Ukraine): Ukraine welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822), entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration". Recalling the words of the AIDS activist from Ukraine, Mrs. Afanasidi, who spoke as the United Nations Civil Reporter at the high-level meeting in 2011, we emphasize once again the remarkable work of all members of national delegations and civil society who made this document as strong as it could be under the circumstances.

We share the view that while the progress made in the global AIDS response is evident, the AIDS epidemic is far from over. Therefore, it is essential to ensure effective, coordinated cooperation with donor organizations, both international and domestic. It is necessary to increase the level of cooperation with all partners to tackle HIV/AIDS, such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO and the United Nations Population Fund.

It has been two years since the adoption of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex) and this plenary meeting provides us with an opportunity to review our achievements. During this period, the Ukrainian national programme on HIV/AIDS was elaborated for the next five years, 2014 to 2018. The main objective of the programme is to increase access to prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and related diseases. In order to address the voices of civil society, Ukraine introduced provisions to overcome the discriminatory manifestations against HIV-infected people.

As of 2012, we have observed the efficiency of related policies. The number of the HIV-infected individuals who receive antiretroviral therapy has doubled. We have managed to reduce to 1.6 per cent the number of new cases of HIV infection and diminish up to six times the proportion of cases of HIV infection among the young population.

Regardless of the significant financial expense, we strive to expand the public access to HIV cost-free treatment and preventive programmes. This year, the HIV/AIDS State budget expenses were significantly

increased by the Government. In our country, substitution therapy is available for injecting drug users as a part of the national programme to fight against HIV/AIDS for 2009-2013. We are looking forward to the visit of Ms. Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, and Mr. Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund, to review the considerable progress made in our national HIV response.

Ukraine strives to implement the best practices of international policies in the areas of health, the environment and socioeconomic development. We believe that health and sustainable development are cross-cutting issues. Therefore, Ukraine, as an elected member of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board for 2014-2016, will endorse the HIV/AIDS item on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

We strongly favour an open international dialogue on a wide range of issues on sustainability. Therefore, Ukraine supports the adoption of draft decision A/67/L.69, submitted by the President of the General Assembly, on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS. The inclusion of this item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly will give us the opportunity to come closer to meeting the standards of the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to the national and global process towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Djibouti on behalf of the Group of African States and the representative of Mozambique on behalf of the Southern African Development Community member States. I should also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on such an important matter.

Eliminating the scourge of HIV/AIDS remains imperative to the well-being and prosperity not only of my own country, Zimbabwe, and the African region, but also to the global community at large. Not least, I thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/67/822) under this agenda item. My delegation takes note of the recommendations made therein.

HIV and AIDS continue to cause untold suffering to many people, in particular in our region, southern Africa, which has been one of the hardest hit. In Zimbabwe, the impact of HIV/AIDS on health-care delivery has been severe. It has already reversed the impressive gains in human and social development, with increased infant mortality and reduced life expectancy rates palpably showing the extent of this reversal.

The capacity of the health-delivery system to cope with the demands of this pandemic has been severely undermined by limited resources and competing priorities. The human resource shortages caused by brain drain have only served to further aggravate the already dire situation.

Today, 12 years after the landmark special session on HIV/AIDS and two years after the adoption of the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex), we are glad to note that considerable progress has been achieved through aggressive follow-up to these deliberate commitments at both the national and international levels. The progress that has been achieved in the global AIDS response illustrates the power of global cooperation for a common cause. It shows that with a more decisive escalation in financing the HIV/AIDS response, we may be able to achieve near-zero new infections and 100 per cent antiretroviral therapy coverage for those already infected. We owe this not only to our generation but to those still to come.

It has been gratifying to note the steady progress made by my own country in the fight to halt the spread of the HIV pandemic, and even more so in a time of severe economic hardship. Zimbabwe made tremendous progress in reducing HIV/AIDS prevalence from over 25 per cent in 2001 to 13.1 per cent by the end of 2011. This was due to a combination of changes in sexual behaviour, improved condom use and, to a lesser extent, mortality. Over the past two years, a dedicated expansion of access to antiretroviral therapy has led to a decline in the rate of new infections in children and progress in prolonging the lives of HIV-positive mothers. In the space of only two years, between 2009 and 2011, the proportion of pregnant women on antiretroviral therapy increased from 59 to 98 per cent, which contributed to the prevention of mother-to-child infections.

We are glad to share that we have also been able to finance 31 per cent of antiretroviral therapy programmes through domestic resources mobilized through an AIDS levy. The levy ensures that 3 per cent of all personal income taxes and corporate taxes are directly channeled to the national AIDS response. We hope to gradually escalate domestic financing not only for the

HIV response but also for the health system in general by meeting the ambitious target of allocating 15 per cent of the national budget to health by the year 2015, as highlighted in our current National HIV Strategic Plan and in line with the Abuja Declaration. We underline in particular the assistance given to Zimbabwe by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria over these difficult years. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS has done a tremendous job in tandem with the Global Fund, and in that regard I note the presence here today of its Executive Director, Mr. Michel Sidibé, and commend its exemplary work.

The Secretary-General's report mentions the possibility of providing life-long treatment to HIV-positive pregnant women through a once-a-day regimen, also known as Option B. Zimbabwe certainly hopes that this will soon be a reality, as it would significantly improve the lives of millions of HIV-positive pregnant women through the simpler administration of that regimen. It is now an established fact that women are more at risk than their male counterparts, and an overwhelming body of research shows that prevalence is higher among women than men. Moreover, ensuring that children are born disease-free depends on their mothers' access to the most effective and efficient antiretroviral therapy regimens available.

Although we are celebrating the progress that we have made as a country in scaling up our national response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, that is not to say that our journey has not encountered its fair share of challenges. Indeed, the journey is far from over. While Zimbabwe has put in place an excellent mechanism for directing domestic resources to HIV/AIDS programmes through the AIDS levy, funding for the HIV response in general remains far below capacity. Furthermore, although we continue to cooperate well with international partners in scaling up our response, funding from external sources has not reached the desired levels, which has had a negative impact on our overall response to the pandemic.

The challenges that we have faced as a nation in coordinating our response to the HIV pandemic have also given us the opportunity to learn some crucial lessons. Key among those has been the recognition that HIV cannot be addressed in isolation from broader social and economic contexts, such as the empowerment of women, the eradication of poverty, the strengthening of national health systems and the provision of food and social protection to vulnerable groups, and in particular those affected by the disease.

In efforts to address the social impacts of HIV on children, our Government has enacted a national action plan for orphans and vulnerable children in order to ensure coordinated assistance to that vulnerable group. In its first phase, the programme managed to assist 440,000 children with basic services, including food, medication and psychological support. In its second phase, which will cover the years 2011 to 2015, it is envisaged that the programme will assist about 250,000 households with cash transfers and pay school fees for about 550,000 primary school and 200,000 secondary school children, many of whom are orphans now.

In his report, the Secretary-General points out that despite its progress in reducing HIV prevalence, Africa remains the continent most heavily affected by the pandemic. Against this background, we believe that the time to invest boldly in initiatives that will eradicate this scourge from our continent in a concerted way is now. We are perfectly placed to take advantage of the momentum that has been made and the commendable progress achieved to leapfrog into a future where no child will lose his or her parents to this ignoble disease and where no mother will have to watch her child die prematurely as a result of it.

On this note, allow me to restate my country's firm commitment to working with all relevant and committed stakeholders within the African continent and beyond to ensure that our promises and pledges with regard to HIV/AIDS are honestly matched and that we all realize the desired goals in the agreed timeframes.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): In adopting the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex) exactly two years ago today at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly, Member States committed to a set of ambitious goals to be achieved by 2015. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the progress made in implementing the Declaration. While we are encouraged by the many achievements, we are also cognizant of the need to urgently address the remaining gaps and challenges.

Though the HIV epidemic in Armenia remains contained, we are concerned by its continuing growth in our region. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, while the rate of new HIV infections and AIDS-related mortality have been declining globally,

they continue to be on the rise in Eastern Europe. The significant number of HIV infection cases registered in our country is connected with migration processes. More than half of registered HIV cases are labour migrants who were infected through heterosexual contacts outside of Armenia. Migration restrictions in host countries related to HIV and the limited access to health-care services, HIV prevention measures and information directly influenced the health care sector of Armenia. The increase in the number of registered HIV cases in Armenia in recent years is also associated with the scaling up of laboratory diagnostic capacities as well as the upgrading of HIV counselling, testing and referral systems. As a result, the number of HIV tests has increased, and HIV detectability has improved significantly.

In its efforts to address the epidemic, the Government of Armenia has striven to ensure evidence- and human rights-based approaches. Our efforts have focused on the most at-risk populations, with the goal of raising their awareness about HIV, promoting safer behaviour and expanding their access to information, services and means of HIV prevention, including harm reduction and access to treatment.

Special attention is paid to HIV prevention and education among youth. Starting in 2010, healthy-lifestyle training courses with an HIV education component were introduced in school curricula and are taught as a separate subject. The rate of pregnant women who receive HIV counseling and testing is more than 95 per cent. All pregnant women diagnosed with HIV are provided with services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus. We are committed to further scaling up those services so as to achieve our shared goal of an AIDS-free generation.

Armenia's legislation in the field of HIV/AIDS was significantly revised in 2010-2011, with a view to protecting the rights of people living with HIV; in particular, restrictions on the entry, stay or residence of people living with the disease were removed. Restrictions were also removed that barred them from adopting children or holding positions in the Government service system.

We would also like to acknowledge the continued partnership and support extended to us by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). As a result, a significant national capacity was built, a strong national response was formed, and antiretroviral treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission became available for all those in need.

Despite the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, the share of domestic funding for the response has increased over the past few years. At the same time, we would like to call on our partners to continue their support, in line with the principle of shared responsibility and global solidarity. That will be essential for sustaining and scaling up the response in Armenia.

By joining the Millennium Declaration, Armenia committed itself to incorporating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into its national long-term policies and plans and introducing sustainable strategies and programmes for integrating economic growth and human development. Through broad consultations, Armenia has developed a national MDG framework incorporating nationalized targets and indicators for 2015. The implementation of the national AIDS programme will be a major contributing factor towards the achievement of the MDGs in Armena by that date.

At the same time, as we all embark on a process to define a new development agenda beyond 2015, we must ensure that the AIDS response remains on the agenda.

In conclusion, let me mention that remarkable progress has been achieved thus far, which we should use as a basis for our continued efforts and united practical actions to achieve the common goals and targets outlined in the Political Declaration.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): In 2011, two years ago, I had the honour to join with my colleague, Ambassador Charles Ntwaagae of Botswana, who spoke earlier this afternoon, in co-facilitating the drafting of, and negotiations for, the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS. In that Declaration, we all agreed to a set of very bold targets for a world free of AIDS, and this year's report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822) gives us some reason to be optimistic about the progress made.

The increased outreach in many countries to HIV prevention and treatment services is a direct factor in the global decline in new infections and AIDS-related deaths. The news that half of the global reductions in new infections have been among newborns is testament

to increased investments in treatment for HIV-positive women.

But while those achievements should be celebrated, much remains to be done. By the end of this afternoon's debate, an estimated 850 people will have been newly infected with HIV, and more than 580 will have died. The number of people currently living with HIV is 1.5 times the population of my own country, Australia. Women between the ages of 15 and 49 confront the stark reality that AIDS is the leading cause of death for their age group.

The accelerated progress towards the target of 15 million people living with HIV accessing antiretroviral treatment is welcome, but we are only just over the halfway mark. Nearly three quarters of the children needing treatment are missing out. Key populations, including sex workers, people who inject drugs and men who have sex with men, continue to be disproportionately affected due to their vulnerable status in society. The barriers to treatment and services for those people must be removed.

Obviously, our work is unfinished; complacency is an enemy. So, too, are the prevailing attitudes in some societies towards those who are living with, or at greatest risk of, HIV infection.

Last year I expressed alarm that few countries — indeed, I criticized my own country, Australia, at the time — had started the process of incorporating the commitments, targets, actions and timelines of the Political Declaration into their national HIV strategies and financing plans. A year later, there is stronger political leadership and accountability of the HIV response in many countries. We congratulate those low- and middle-income countries — and I congratulate my own country at last — for increasing the share of their domestic resources for the HIV response and incorporating the strategy of the Political Declaration into national strategies. We hope that this encourages others to step up their efforts to realize an AIDS-free world.

It is disappointing to read in the report of the Secretary-General that many programmes for key populations at higher risk remain underfunded domestically. HIV prevention and treatment services must be the responsibility of national Governments, especially for those populations. Australia is keeping that priority and at-risk populations at the centre of our efforts and stepping up our work to engage younger generations in the response.

A key factor in our efforts to minimize the spread of HIV has been the use of harm reduction and minimization programmes for people who inject drugs. The result is that we are very close to eliminating transmission among drug users. For every dollar we invested in those programmes between 2000 and 2009, $4 were returned in health-care cost savings and, most importantly, over 32,000 infections were averted.

We all must heed the call for a more strategic investment approach for the HIV response. We need the courage to change our approach to HIV prevention and treatment. We must work in a smarter manner and stop investing in ineffective programming and inefficient governance architecture. An investment approach is not just about making decisions about where to invest resources more effectively. It also means being focused on stronger, more sustainable investments. The investment approach will go a long way towards generating savings that will allow us to reassess the global funding shortfall.

During 2013, Australia will be the Vice-Chair of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board, and we will seek to support the efforts of UNAIDS to encourage countries to invest more strategically and to respond more effectively to the needs of those most at risk. In July 2014, Australia will host the 20th International AIDS Conference in Melbourne. That will be the last International AIDS Conference before the post-2015 era begins. The Conference will showcase examples of strategic investments that are producing real results on the ground for populations most at risk — results that will help drive us to a world of zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

To conclude, let me thank Mr. Michel Sidibé and all of his outstanding team at UNAIDS. Their optimistic vision and determination are indispensable, and we owe them great thanks. Time is running out to deliver on the targets we set ourselves in 2011. We must renew our commitment and show that we can mobilize a truly international effort to ends the AIDS epidemic — an achievable objective for the first time in history, but one which will simply disappear without determined, stronger effort.

Mrs. Mørch Smith (Norway): I would like to start by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive

report on the achievements made since the adoption, in 2011, of the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (A/67/822). We are pleased to see that the most affected countries are intensifying prevention efforts and access to treatment. However, we need to repeat what we stated in 2011: there is no room for contentment. The epidemic is not over and big challenges are still ahead of us. The epidemic is continuing to grow in several regions of the world, especially in countries where it is mainly driven by drug use.

The HIV-related work is entering into a new phase. For people with access to treatment, living with HIV will be similar to managing other lifelong chronic diseases. Persons living with HIV will develop non-communicable diseases. In many countries they will constitute a large proportion of patients with such diseases. In other words, HIV needs to be treated as both an infectious disease and a chronic disease.

We have a generation of children who have lived with HIV all of their lives. Those children are now adolescents. They need sexual and reproductive health services to make independent choices regarding their own sexuality and fertility. Young persons living with HIV, especially women, need access to family planning and other reproductive health services. We need to intensify activities among the groups that are hardest to reach. If HIV is not addressed in such groups, the epidemic will continue to spread. It is therefore important for public health to focus more actively on prevention among groups of people at increased risk.

In Norway we are working to contribute to the goals of the 2011 Political Declaration. We still face challenges related to the increasing incidence of HIV among men who have sex with men and to care for immigrants living with HIV. That is despite considerable efforts invested in those areas. Persons living with HIV are, unfortunately, facing stigma in Norwegian society. Over the past couple of years, we have focused on issues linked to HIV exposure and transmission. We have focused on improving the penal code, through a national law commission and cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

The history of the work with HIV has been a game changer, as new partnerships emerged and changed the way we approached public health challenges. The groups of people at high risk of infection, as well as those living with HIV, have demonstrated leadership and creativity. They partnered with Governments and private actors. That led to changes, including in the pricing of medicine, adherence and prevention.

We still need the active participation of those groups, regardless of whether they have made lifestyle choices that are not generally accepted, or even legal, in some countries. Those groups may hold the key to rolling the epidemic back.

The challenge in front of us is complex. In many ways we have harvested the low-hanging fruit. To go further, we need to move in new ways, strengthen unusual partnerships and ensure participation of specifically affected groups: prisoners, drug users, sexual minorities, persons who sell sex and, most notably, young people and women.

Mr. Mukerji (India): We take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822). At the outset, we would like to express our support for the draft decision (A/67/L.69) submitted by the President of the General Assembly, dated 4 June.

It is heartening to note that the international cooperative effort to respond to the challenge posed by the spread of AIDS has achieved significant success. As the report of the Secretary General points out, that has been due in equal measure to extraordinary scientific breakthroughs, concerted global action and bold progress by individual countries. The special role of antiretroviral treatment in achieving the objective of preventing AIDS cannot be understated.

In India, in terms of prevalence, the adult HIV rate is close to 0.3 per cent. However, in absolute terms, our HIV-positive population numbers approximately 3 million. The primary objective of our national programme to combat HIV/AIDS is to halt and reverse the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2015.

The main features of our national AIDS programme include scaling up targeted intervention efforts for high risk groups, strategizing comprehensive information, education and communication packages for specific segments and scaling up of the service delivery component.

We recognize that the fight against HIV and AIDS has socioeconomic and development dimensions, in addition to the public health aspect. Our endeavour is to fully mainstream HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment in all our schemes and activities. We

have involved the corporate sector, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders as partners towards that end.

The need for an integrated approach that includes effective prevention strategies and access to low-cost affordable treatment for all cannot be overemphasized in terms of the effective containment of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

There is a need for continuing cooperation and coordination at the international level to fight the challenge. One of the major obstacles in the achievement of universal treatment is the high cost of antiretroviral drugs. The Indian pharmaceutical industry has been plugging that critical gap by reducing the costs of those life-saving drugs by producing high quality, affordable drugs for use in India and in other developing countries.

The availability of second-generation antiretroviral drugs will not have any meaningful impact if low cost generic products are not available in the market. It is pertinent to note that only 4 per cent of persons receiving treatment have access to second-generation medicines.

India is currently meeting approximately 80 per cent of the global antiretroviral drug demand. India is committed to using all flexibilities under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights to ensure the availability of affordable and quality medicine to all people living with HIV/AIDS.

We strongly believe that the work done by all of us in this field has significantly contributed towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in this sector. In order to ensure that our effort is sustainable, we need to focus on resource mobilization, technology transfer and knowledge. The role to be played by industrially advanced countries and civil society in the context of the work of the United Nations and its partners is of immense importance in that context.

We believe that the targets and commitments contained in the 2011 Political Declaration can be fully met only if we identify resource mobilization as a priority. The narrow considerations of commerce and profitability should not be allowed to affect issues of life and death, which is what our fight against the spread of AIDS is all about. India stands ready to play a role in that context.

As the Secretary-General's report states, "the concept of shared responsibility and global solidarity must be advanced" (*A/67/822, summary*) and the funding gap closed so that we ensure a more strategic focus in our efforts to eliminate HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President for this opportunity to speak on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS (resolution S-26/2, annex) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex).

(*spoke in English*)

Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822). We applaud the concerted efforts of individual countries and the global community in the fight against AIDS, as well as the scientific advances that have resulted in significant progress to date in achieving the ambitious targets of the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, adopted by the Assembly in 2011. We are also encouraged by the unprecedented gains made in reducing the number of adults and children newly infected with HIV or dying from AIDS-related causes. We are particularly struck by the fact that half of the decrease in new infections globally in the past two years is among newborns. Those declines are due to lifesaving prevention and treatment services, which are reaching more people than ever.

However, we are concerned that inequalities persist within the global HIV/AIDS response. Approximately 7 million eligible people still lack access to lifesaving HIV treatment, with such access lowest among children. Programmes for preventing mother-to-child transmission have produced encouraging results, but coverage remains uneven, and more work must be done to bring national programmes in line with international recommendations.

HIV continues to profoundly affect women and girls across all regions, with women accounting for 49 per cent of all adults living with HIV worldwide in 2011. Yet attention and resources for women's HIV-related needs are severely deficient, including those directed at preventing violence against women. Moreover, many people living with or affected by HIV, especially women and girls, still face stigma, discrimination and injustice and suffer physical or verbal abuse, social ostracism and

emotional distress. To address the lagging progress in such areas, we must increase our efforts to strengthen national systems, and not just health systems. That will lead to a more effective, integrated and comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS, one that links it with other health and development efforts, so that synergies are maximized and sustained. Key populations where HIV is most prevalent will then no longer lack equitable access to services.

Canada concurs with many of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, including that services for eliminating mother-to-child transmission should be further integrated into antenatal service delivery. More progress must be made in preventing new infections among children and adolescents, strengthening follow-up care and treatment of HIV-exposed infants and children, and focusing resources on addressing the HIV-related needs of women above and beyond current programming, including the prevention of violence against women. HIV and tuberculosis services must be fully integrated, and services should be closely linked to sexual and reproductive health services.

Canada continues to be an active participant in the global HIV/AIDS response, with efforts that focus on strengthening health systems, maternal, newborn and child health and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Equality between women and men is integrated into Canada's international development assistance, including our efforts to address HIV/AIDS. We have been a strong supporter of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) since its inception, in 1996, providing long-term institutional funding so that UNAIDS can provide high-quality advice to ministries and developing countries. And our engagement in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is an essential part of our efforts towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly MDG 6 — on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases — as well as Canada's Group of Eight Muskoka Initiative commitments on maternal and child health.

Canada's domestic response has made significant progress, addressing the specific needs of its population, which has been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted infections. This year alone, the Government of Canada's domestic investment will be more than $93 million, through HIV- and other communicable-disease-focused initiatives for research, laboratory science, surveillance, vaccine development, public awareness, prevention and facilitation of access to care, as well as in treatment and support.

To achieve the new targets set out in the Declaration, Canada will continue to invest in critical research, develop strategic partnerships and support evidence-based policies and programmes that most effectively meet the needs of people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS. We commend UNAIDS and the *Lancet* for jointly establishing a new commission, From AIDS to Sustainable Health, and we look forward to the ensuing dialogue in that process.

To ensure that the year 2015 does not slip by with targets unmet, let us renew our commitment and solidarity, and focus on accountability and shared responsibility for results in the battle against HIV and AIDS.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): I would like to thank the President for organizing this plenary meeting on HIV and AIDS. My delegation expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/67/822) highlighting the progress made towards achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex), which should be met by 2015. We also commend the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for its tireless efforts in combating HIV/AIDS.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Djibouti on behalf of the African Group.

HIV/AIDS is still devastating large sections of our communities. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa are at different stages of addressing the pandemic, with mixed results. While some have registered some success, the situation is still grave, despite the efforts made over the years. The year 2015 is slightly more than 18 months away, and the prospects of eliminating new infections and achieving universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment for those who need it do not look good, which is a serious indictment of our collective commitment to fighting the scourge. Even so, we cannot give up. We must redouble our efforts. That is why, over the past decade, countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, have demonstrated that the epidemic can be tamed by adopting and coordinating an aggressive multisectoral strategy aimed at fighting HIV/AIDS from within our communities, and driven by political leadership at the highest levels.

The Secretary-General's report shows that there has been a decline in new infections; however, a global decline of 20 per cent, while encouraging, is not satisfactory. It suggests that preventive services have not been accessible and that, where they have been accessible, they have not been fully utilized.

Kenya has experienced a steady decline in its HIV prevalence rates as a result of the implementation of various HIV programmes that target sector-specific priority areas based on a multisectoral approach. Those efforts have been strengthened by an effective legislative, policy and institutional framework that is in place to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The prevalence rates in Kenya currently stand at 6.3 per cent, which is down from more than 13 per cent in the 1990s. The Government of Kenya is determined to continue with its aggressive awareness campaigns and expand voluntary counselling, testing initiatives and centres.

Despite the gains made, HIV/AIDS remains a leading cause of death in the country because of inadequate and unpredictable funding resources to sustain the progress and scale up those interventions. Nevertheless, the National AIDS Control Council is determined to address the challenge and has devised a new local funding mechanism following the public-private partnership model to ensure that financing for the HIV/AIDS response is sustained both in the short and long term so that the gains made by the country in managing the epidemic are not reversed.

Kenya is one of the 22 priority countries listed under the Global Plan, which provides the foundation for country-led movements towards eliminating new HIV infections among children and keeping their mothers alive. In 2011, an estimated 13,000 children became newly infected with HIV in Kenya. In November 2012, to address that grave situation and in line with the 2011 Political Declaration, Kenya launched a national campaign to stop new HIV infections among children by 2015. The campaign is being run under a slogan in Swahili that means "make a decision and protect generations". The campaign is designed to mobilize Kenyans to take both individual and social responsibility in the prevention of all new HIV infections in children and the promotion of maternal health. It serves as an important milestone in the deployment of our national AIDS programme.

The campaign aims to mobilize citizens, especially women of reproductive age, to seek access to HIV prevention services. It also aims to provide preventive services for HIV-positive pregnant mothers and improve their overall health. It will also encourage the full participation of men in ensuring that their children and their children's mothers are healthy. It will also encourage men to go for voluntary testing so that they know their HIV status and to always accompany their partners on their antenatal clinic visits.

Expanding care and treatment services is fundamental to reaching universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2015. The gap between available resources and actual needs is projected to increase in the coming years. Cost reductions in antiretroviral drugs are critical in bridging that gap. One way of addressing the challenge is to enhance and strengthen the capacity of low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa, in order to enable them to develop and manufacture essential drugs. In that regard, we welcome the Global Fund's declaration of support for local production of essential medicines and look forward to support for the implementation of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa.

Globally, women and young girls make up a huge percentage of those living with HIV/AIDS, the majority of whom are young people. Women's vulnerability can be attributed to society's inequality. Their socioeconomic disadvantage and dependency affects their ability to make free and informed choices concerning their sexual and reproductive health. Furthermore, a lack of financial security and employment opportunities may render them vulnerable to engaging in sex work and prone to abuse and violence. That is the feminization of HIV/AIDS.

Kenya is addressing the situation by providing education and increasing women's participation in all sectors and at all levels of decision-making. The Government has initiated a number of policies and programmes that focus on the deepening of participation of women and young people in all aspects of development as well as their economic empowerment. Among those programmes are the Women Development Fund and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund. The Kenya Cash Transfer Programme for orphans and vulnerable children is also reducing the risk of young people contracting HIV by delaying the age of sexual debut.

In conclusion, we are all aware of how a lack of adequate investment in HIV prevention, treatment and care has the potential to wipe away all our hard-won gains and render current and future development ineffective. The ongoing dialogue on sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda offer an important opportunity to look afresh at the strategies that we have put in place. The goals are interconnected but there has not been sufficient focus on maximizing those mutually supporting dynamics. We must identify and address the drawbacks in the realization of Millennium Development Goal 6 in the context of the other Goals and what happens to the unfinished agenda as we formulate other development goals for the future we want, in order to win the war against this scourge.

Mr. Newry (Bahamas): I am pleased to participate in this important debate this afternoon on the issue of HIV/AIDS, which continues to garner our attention more than 30 years after being recognized as a major health risk of epidemic proportions.

The Bahamas aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Haiti on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

As the General Assembly is aware, the Caribbean region is greatly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as it has been identified as one of the regions with the highest adult rate of HIV prevalence. Our Governments continue to deploy all the resources necessary to achieve sustainable action in combating the disease. As the host of the Caribbean HIV Conference in November 2011, the Bahamas stands in solidarity with its sister CARICOM countries in providing high-quality and sustainable prevention, treatment and support services to all persons living with HIV/AIDS.

We are at a critical juncture. The stock-taking exercise we are undertaking this afternoon is vital as we continue to chart the course towards achieving by 2015 the 10 specific and timebound targets set out in the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex). The Bahamas thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/67/822), which serves to guide us in our deliberations and discussions.

The Bahamas remains unwavering in its efforts against HIV/AIDS and is pleased to contribute to the 96 per cent global AIDS response progress reporting rate by Member States, as noted by the Secretary-General in his report. I am pleased to report that the Bahamas has completed its midterm review report in relation to the Political Declaration.

The Bahamas continues to work towards an AIDS-free generation and reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and to the achievement of the 10 targets, as outlined in the Political Declaration. In an assessment of the 10 targets, specifically that of reducing sexual transmission by 50 per cent, since 2002 the number of newly reported HIV infections in the Bahamas has continued to decline. The 2012 *United Nations World AIDS Day Report* results noted that the Caribbean region saw the sharpest decline in the number of new infections, with the Bahamas and a few of its sister Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries observing a decline of more than 50 per cent. In 2011, 301 new cases were reported. That decline was achieved as a result of targeted prevention messaging, particularly to youth through community outreach events offering free HIV testing. The challenge remains of how to reach those who, for reasons of stigma and discrimination, do not come forward. Our national HIV/AIDS programme is focusing its effort and scarce resources where they are most needed.

In terms of eliminating new HIV infections in children and substantially reducing AIDS-related maternal deaths, prenatal antiretroviral therapy in the Bahamas — recognized internationally as a best practice — has resulted in the almost total elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. There was no perinatal transmission in 2010 and only two cases in 2011, both from mothers who did not follow the antiretroviral prenatal treatment. Free replacement feeding further reduced the risk of transmission to infants. However, a challenge remains with regard to women who do not seek antenatal care or who refuse to take antiretroviral therapy during pregnancy. Furthermore, strengthened antenatal child health programmes and improved access to antiretroviral therapy have resulted in a decrease in maternal deaths in HIV-positive mothers, with only two such deaths recorded in the past five years.

On the target to reach the 15 million people living with HIV with antiretroviral treatment, antiretroviral treatment in the Bahamas reached almost 60 per cent of those in need of it through the free services offered by the Government of the Bahamas, thereby further closing the gap and decreasing the AIDS mortality rate. Prior to the introduction of treatment, in 2002, annual deaths exceeded 200. The improved access resulted in

a decrease in the crude mortality rate from 49.8 per 100,000 in 2004 to 34.6 per 100,000 in 2008 and to 29 per 100,000 in 2010.

In relation to reducing tuberculosis (TB) deaths among people living with HIV by 50 per cent, the situation of TB and resulting deaths among the HIV-positive population remains a challenge, the latter being met by strong collaboration between our tuberculosis-control unit and the national AIDS programme.

On the issue of the global AIDS resource gap, while we laud the significant achievements witnessed globally in the past 24 months as a result of the increase in access to antiretroviral treatment, the decline in the number of new HIV infections, particularly among newborns, and the decline in AIDS-related deaths, we must be ever-mindful of the ongoing financial resources challenges being faced by low-income and middle-income countries, which from a socioeconomic development perspective adversely effect efforts to effectively respond to the disease.

The persistent decline in international development assistance — and, in the case of the Bahamas and CARICOM countries, unfair restriction of access to financial assistance based on per capita gross national income, despite overwhelming vulnerabilities — continues to have negative implications for our efforts to scale up prevention and treatment programmes and to sustain an effective response. Notwithstanding the fact that due to the decreased assistance, the need for our Governments to divert limited resources to tackle other pressing health challenges, such as non-communicable diseases, continues to pose a serious and significant threat to our region's socioeconomic development. The Government is the primary financial source for the national AIDS programme in the Bahamas.

It is estimated that funding from all sources totalled in excess of $4 million in 2008. However, with the economic downturn that year and the resulting decrease in the availability of new international funding, the Bahamas continues to rely on the generosity of international and regional partners and donors, such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Pan American Health Organization and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief programme, to augment national allocations and to close the funding gap. On behalf of the Government, I take this opportunity to express sincere thanks and appreciation to those donor partners for the valuable assistance rendered to our national AIDS programme in its ongoing efforts to provide an effective and sustained response in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, further funding is needed in order to sustain progress.

In terms of the target to eliminate gender inequalities and gender-based abuse and violence and to increase the capacity of women and girls to protect themselves, the Government of the Bahamas has criminalized sexual intercourse involving a person known to be HIV-positive who does not disclose his or her status. The Bahamas has also addressed the issue of domestic violence through the enactment, in 2008, of the Domestic Violence Protection Orders Act. In addition, a draft national gender policy is currently being finalized to further address gender inequalities and to protect the rights of women and girls.

On the issue of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, the full recognition and realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms are a part of the Government's programme. Despite the laudable achievements in the enactment of ground-breaking legislation, stigma and discrimination continue to pose a challenge to persons living with or affected by HIV and to create a barrier to detection, care and treatment, particularly among the most at-risk segment of the population. Nevertheless, through better prevention education and alternative resources, civil society is beginning to close the gap.

To eliminate parallel systems for HIV-related services and strengthen the integration of the AIDS response in global health and development, the Bahamas has established a public health programme approach by addressing the social determinants of health. The national AIDS programme has traditionally employed a multisectoral approach to address the complex issues and needs associated with HIV/AIDS and other health-related and social development challenges. In terms of social development, challenges persist in our efforts to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. To improve the overall quality of the life of the populations, the Government is in the early consulting stage of establishing a multidisciplinary social safety net programme to assist in meeting the social development challenges and needs of the most vulnerable sectors of our society. The Bahamas will continue its effort to strengthen its national health-care and social-protection system to improve service delivery through the integration of AIDS and other

health-related responses in its overall socioeconomic and development strategy framework.

In conclusion, 2015 is fast approaching. Attention to HIV will continue to have an impact upon the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We cannot afford to rest on our laurels if we are to save successive generations from the challenges of HIV and AIDS. The post-2015 period will present significant development challenges for the entire world community as we seek to establish a more robust, sustainable and effective international development framework. Out concerted efforts must therefore, through shared responsibilities, increased resources and strong political will, be the beacon by which we steer the course towards the goal of an AIDS-free generation.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): My delegation would like thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822). We would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for giving us an opportunity to have a dialogue on this agenda item with other Member States.

More than 30 years have passed since HIV/AIDS first came to the world's attention. When it was first reported, in 1981, people feared AIDS not only because it was an unknown disease but also because it was an untreatable and fatal one. Our understanding of HIV/AIDS at that time was woefully insufficient. That lack of understanding led to discrimination and prejudice against patients and their families. However, thanks to the efforts of scientists and other medical professionals, the causative virus was identified and treatments to control it were developed. Today, HIV infection is a medically controllable disease.

Nevertheless, the number of people infected by HIV worldwide was estimated at approximately 34 million as of the end of 2011, with some 2.5 million people being newly infected annually. Various measures have enabled some countries to achieve a decrease in the number of newly infected individuals, while there are other countries where the number of newly infected patients continues to increase. Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS remains a complicated and multifaceted challenge.

There are fewer than 1,000 days left to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With regard to HIV/AIDS, it is crucial for us to continue the steady implementation of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, anex), and to move forward the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. In that regard, my delegation would like to emphasize the importance of universal health coverage and taking a people-centred approach, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General.

At the High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs held during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly in September 2010, my country committed to contributing $5 billion over five years starting from 2011 to address global health issues. That included our commitment to contribute up to $800 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as Japan announced at the Fund's third voluntary Replenishment Conference. We have been implementing those commitments in spite of our difficult financial situation, for the reason that health-related issues, including HIV/AIDS, are global issues that directly impact human security.

A lack of equitable access to life-saving HIV treatment, especially for women and children, needs to be dealt with. Human security provides a comprehensive approach that strengthens the protection and empowerment of people and communities in need. In that regard, Japan expects United Nations organizations and Member States to draw on this approach on the ground to fight HIV/AIDS.

My delegation believes that the concept of universal health coverage is essential for accelerating the response to HIV/AIDS. In order to enable all people to access services for HIV/AIDS, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and health care, it is necessary to implement comprehensive measures to strengthen health systems as the foundation of universal health coverage, including specialized programmes for HIV/AIDS. For example, it is effective to integrate counter-HIV/AIDS programmes, such as counselling and voluntary testing for HIV during ordinary prenatal check-ups, into general health services.

Under our national health programme in Japan, we have established effective health and medical systems by locating health-care facilities nationwide and by training medical specialists such as doctors, nurses and pharmacists. Furthermore, Japan has achieved universal medical care insurance in order to enable everyone to access sufficient services. Our challenge now is to realize universal access to the necessary health-care

services for all people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against them and their families.

While sparing no effort to achieve the MDGs, we also need to consider the post-2015 development agenda. Japan has been actively contributing to efforts to set that agenda through such means as organizing, since 2011, the Post-MDGs Contact Group. Furthermore, discussions on the post-2015 agenda are ongoing in various forums, which will serve as a good basis for the discussions among Member States. My delegation believes that the major challenges to be included in the new framework are equity and inclusiveness, universal health coverage, quality education, sustainability, resilience to natural disasters, economic growth and job creation. Among those, the principle of universal health coverage should be recognized as one of the major elements of health-related goals in future discussions. Japan is ready to share its experiences in the area of health, including on the implementation of universal health coverage, with the international community, and we will continue to support other Member States in their efforts to address HIV/AIDS.

Last week, the Government of Japan hosted the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Japan together with the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and the African Union Commission. With the participation of representatives of 51 African countries as well as representatives from many international organizations, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations, the Conference was a huge success. Participants reiterated that health-related issues, including infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, were urgent concerns in African countries. We expect that the follow-up to the outcome of TICAD V, namely, the Yokohama Declaration 2013 and Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017, will contribute to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and infectious and non-communicable diseases in African countries. We look forward to continuing work with the United Nations in that regard.

Mr. Lennartsson (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union earlier this afternoon.

Let me start by welcoming the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822) on the progress made towards achieving the targets of the "Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS", which the General Assembly adopted in 2011 (resolution 65/277, annex). The results presented to us are astonishing. The world has never faced such a strong commitment and concerted efforts to achieve the HIV response that we are now seeing. Over the past seven years, from 2005 to 2012, there was a seven-fold increase in the number of people receiving treatment in Africa, from 1 million to more than 7 million.

But there is no time to slow down the efforts. We have learned that now is the golden moment to make a serious effort to halt the spread of HIV. The 2011-2015 strategy of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is an excellent tool for that work. We strongly endorse the "three zeros" vision. However, we will never achieve our goals if we do not invest more in prevention that leads to behavioural changes. Treatment as prevention is not the sole solution. Expanding treatment as prevention would require significant improvements in the HIV and health-care infrastructures. We must act now through other means.

Primary prevention is an area that is still suffering. Young people — girls and boys and women and men — do have sex, and they have the right to be equipped with the knowledge that they need in order to make informed decisions. In the latest UNAIDS *Performance Monitoring Report*, it is noted that young people's knowledge of HIV appears to have stagnated or even diminishing. It is further stated that UNAIDS needs to translate an increased focus on sexuality education into improved knowledge levels.

In Africa there is now momentum for comprehensive sexuality education, both within and outside the formal school system. UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund and UNESCO have strengthened capacity and resources to review and develop curriculums to reduce risk behaviour in 17 African countries. We all need to support the work that has started. HIV-prevention information is not enough to promote the adoption of healthy behaviour, but it is a necessary prerequisite for positive change.

We need also to continue efforts to enable even more people to get access to treatment and the possibility both to survive and to lead healthy lives. The UNAIDS investment framework is an important tool to maximize the value of invested resources. But we must also increase both domestic and international

resources. Integration and effective health systems are key to not only expansion but sustainability of results.

Another area that we need to address in order to be successful in our work to halt the spread of HIV — and if we are serious when we say that every human being has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health — is discrimination. According to the UNAIDS *Performance Monitoring Report*, an increasing number of processes and programmes are addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination and support for enabling legal environments. But it is still not enough. The unequal status of women and girls and harmful gender norms constitute a threat to women and girls' rights to health and is a driver of the continued HIV epidemic.

Around the world people experience discrimination and serious violence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Even if there are international standards regarding HIV, human rights and the law, there is a challenge to translate those into reduced stigma and protective laws.

People selling sex, men who have sex with men, transgender people and people who inject drugs continue to be criminalized in many countries, which seriously affects their ability to access HIV services or other rights. We must fight for all people's rights and support organizations that work to make change happen and to raise awareness among the general public.

Mrs. Petit (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, France aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/67/822). It is indeed possible to hope for a future generation that is free of HIV, which will require sustained and meaningful efforts. France has prioritized its commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS. We reaffirm our commitment to providing a national and international response to the epidemic.

At the national level, France is implementing a plan to fight HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases for the period 2010-2014. The plan is based on five pillars: prevention, screening, medical care, social assistance and fighting discrimination and research.

Progress has been made, in particular on HIV screening through recent access to self-screening tests, as well with regard to reducing AIDS-related mortality. That progress has been made due in part to non-discriminatory treatment of vulnerable populations, particularly members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and through harm-reduction policies for drug users and through a fully guaranteed sexual right to zero-positive reproductive health care, particularly through the reimbursement of all contraceptives for young women between 15 and 18 years of age.

The fight against HIV and AIDS requires financial support, as well as a commitment to equality, social justice and to defending fundamental rights. France plays its full role in those efforts at the international level, as is especially evident in its financial contributions, which are among the highest in the world and totalled €313 million in 2012. France is the second-largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with more than €1 billion donated from 2011 to 2013, that is, €360 million annually. We are also the number-one donor to the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID) — €100 million in 2012 — thanks to innovative funding. Those efforts have borne fruit. Due to a drop in the cost of antiretroviral therapy, there has been a successful reduction in mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

In that regard, France pays tribute to the role of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Global Fund and UNITAID, as well as regional initiatives including the African Union road map on shared responsibility and global solidarity. However, 7 million eligible people still have not received treatment. The population with the highest prevalence has no equitable access to services. We must therefore accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and maintain our efforts post-2015. The fight against HIV and AIDS should be multisectoral and have an integrated-approach. We hope that the post-2015 development framework will measure up to the stakes involved. The fight against AIDS, TB and malaria, as well as maternal and child health and the fight against non-communicable diseases, require a strengthening of health care systems. We must give non-discriminatory access to services that are deemed by all to be of high quality. That is the definition of universal health-care coverage. We hope that goal of comprehensive, universal and quantifiable health care will have its proper place in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Koko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to express my delegation's thanks to the President

for this opportunity to address the General Assembly on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2, annex) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex).

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the African Group by the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, His Excellency Mr. Roble Olhaye.

I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), our development partners and the Government of the United States, which, through the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, has provided so much technical and financial support to Côte d'Ivoire in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

With a population estimated at 23 million inhabitants, my country remains the most affected State in West Africa, with a prevalence rate of 3.7 per cent, according to the 2011-2012 Demographic and Health Survey, while also being marked by a growing feminization of the epidemic. Moreover, the prevalence rate is three to four times higher among higher-risk populations. That means that Côte d'Ivoire is a State with a mixed epidemic. However, the resolute determination of the Government and the support of the international community have enabled us to achieve the progress set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822).

From 2011 to 2012, we increased the percentage of adults and children eligible for antiviral treatment from 45 to 50.47 per cent. The percentage of estimated new cases of tuberculosis linked to HIV that have received treatment, both against tuberculosis and HIV, rose from 33 per cent to 45.58 per cent in the same period. That points to an improvement in services, which have increased owing to the implementation of the World Health Organization's recommendations.

Côte d'Ivoire is committed to eliminating mother-to-child HIV transmission by implementing a plan to eliminate that type of transmission. The percentage of pregnant women receiving antiviral drugs to help reduce the risk of transmission to their children rose from 29 per cent in 2011 to 38 per cent in 2012. Similarly, the percentage of children born to HIV-positive mothers who were tested during their first two months rose from 4 per cent to 14.33 per cent from 2011 to 2012.

Despite those encouraging results challenges remain, for example, improving young people's level of awareness about HIV. Only 18 per cent of Côte d'Ivoire's young people aged from 18 to 24 have any understanding of HIV. With regard to young people delaying the age of sexual encounters, 18.23 per cent of young people aged 15 to 24 years have had sexual encounters before the age of 15.

One challenge is improving the quality of services provided, services for which strategies have been developed. A second challenge is the need to strengthen health awareness and coordination in response to HIV at all levels of the health-care pyramid, as well as ensuring the participation of community services in such work. The increase in resources devoted to combating AIDS is also a challenge. National and international expenditures to combat AIDS by category and sources have decreased from $117.6 million to $112.7 million.

Despite the crisis situation in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 and 2011, there have been encouraging results, including in prevention, care and treatment thanks to anti-retroviral drugs. The contribution of civil society to the national response through community support and the fight against stigmatization and discrimination, in the context of respect for human rights for individuals living with HIV and AIDS, was quite significant.

To tackle the decrease in resources, Côte d'Ivoire has imposed a tax on tobacco and developed a national resource mobilization plan. The Government pays special attention to the issue of HIV and AIDS. It is for this reason that President Alassane Ouattara has decreed that 2013 would be the Year of Health in Côte d'Ivoire. Concerning AIDS, target populations are included in the national strategic plan elaborated following the 2011 Political Declaration.

I cannot conclude without expressing our thanks once again to UNAIDS and Executive Director Michel Sidibé for their unstinting cooperation with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and all actors and stakeholders combating HIV and AIDS in Côte d'Ivoire and throughout the world.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): The delegation of Thailand would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/67/822). The solid recommendations contained therein and the frank assessment of our gains and of the obstacles on the road ahead will serve the international community well in our continuing

fight against HIV/AIDS. In that connection, Thailand looks forward to the convening of the special event of the General Assembly this year to follow up on the discussions on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as to discussions to formulate the post-2015 development agenda.

As the Secretary-General puts it so succinctly in his report, AIDS is not over. Thailand therefore welcomes the efforts of Member States to redouble efforts to eliminate HIV/AIDS and to continue to address the AIDS epidemic. Those efforts have led to tangible successes since the adoption of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex). At the same time, the Secretary-General also rightly points out that much remains to be done. For Thailand, that means maintaining the momentum to move forward in a sustainable manner to the three zeroes: zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

First, in working to achieve zero new infections and zero discrimination, Thailand has implemented a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach to the issue. We view that approach as integral to providing high-quality prevention services to all key affected populations. We are also experimenting with pilot innovative financing models, such as a country prevention fund, to help scale up our prevention response.

Secondly, Thailand strongly believes that in order to achieve zero AIDS-related deaths, we must scale up our treatment programmes. We find it unacceptable that approximately 7 million people lack access to life-saving HIV treatment, and we find it even more appalling that access is lowest among children. In that regard, we would like to stress the enormous importance of utilizing the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, which will continue to be an essential means to enabling the achievement of universal access, which in turn will support our efforts to achieve zero AIDS-related deaths and zero new HIV infections. Preserving the availability of generic alternatives to branded medicines and increasing the capacity of low- and middle-income countries to develop and manufacture essential medicines must also be part of the equation. We must continue to do our utmost to ensure access to medicines if we are to take our response to HIV and AIDS seriously.

Thirdly, Thailand recognizes that to achieve the three zeroes, we must also enhance our coordination and cooperation beyond our borders. With contributions from the Global Fund, we have been able to provide HIV prevention, treatment and care for migrant workers from neighbouring countries. In November, Thailand will host the eleventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. We hope it will contribute to strengthening regional and international efforts in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Health in general, and the fight against HIV/AIDS in particular, must continue to figure prominently on the future global development agenda. We are therefore in total agreement with the Secretary-General's recommendation that the post-2015 development agenda should take forward the vision of the "three zeroes". Moreover, as a member of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Thailand hopes fervently that health, including the fight against HIV/AIDS, will be adequately addressed within the context of the SDGs.

Finally, Thailand reaffirms its commitment to the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex), and will continue to actively engage in and follow closely the initiatives and discussions that will enable us to do even more to close the gaps, particularly budgetary ones.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/67/PV.85

General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

85th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 11 June 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822)

Draft decision (A/67/L.69)

Mr. Kydyrov (Kyrgyzstan): As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/822), despite the progress made in the fight against AIDS, many Member States, especially developing countries, continue to face significant challenges in their efforts to combat HIV. The number of people infected with HIV continues to rise in several regions, including the countries of Central Asia. We therefore support the recommendations proposed in the Secretary-General's report to take urgent measures to respond to the evolving situation.

With a rate of 12.5 per 100,000, the Kyrgyz Republic remains a country with a low level of HIV prevalence. However, in recent years Kyrgyzstan has seen an upward trend in the number of HIV infected. The most affected groups are injecting drug users, followed by women living with HIV and children born to HIV-infected mothers. Kyrgyzstan has therefore taken decisive steps to address HIV infection and the objectives of the Political Declaration of 2011 (resolution 65/277).

The Government has approved a State programme for the stabilization of the HIV epidemic and its socioeconomic consequences in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2012-2016. The programme aims at preventing the spread of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections among women and youth, particularly intravenous drug users, providing health care and social support for HIV-infected persons, AIDS patients and their families. Considerable attention is paid to strengthening the health system, as well as to coordination and management. In that regard, a national plan for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the State programme has been adopted.

It should be noted that the policy documents, prepared in accordance with international guidelines, are an integral part of the development strategy of the country, which is based on the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the objectives of the Political Declaration of 2011 have been incorporated into our national programme of health-care reform for the period 2012 -2016.

The main funding sources for the state programme are the national budget and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It is important that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been designated as the executive organization for the initial stage of programme implementation. Under the coordination of UNDP, a substantial part of the

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-35934 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

work is carried out by non-governmental organizations, which account for 30 per cent of the funds allocated by the Global Fund. At the same time, collaborative partnerships have been established between State and non-governmental organizations. At present, the country coordinating committee mechanism of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria consists of nine representatives of non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of the community of people living with HIV.

Kyrgyzstan is also taking active measures to improve national legislation; in particular, our draft law on reproductive rights and guarantees of their implementation has been currently submitted for public discussion. The main purpose of the draft law is to harmonize international standards in the field of sexual and reproductive rights. The law recognizes the sexual and reproductive rights of citizens as an integral part of human rights, establishes a Government guarantee and forms the legal basis for services in the field of sexual and reproductive health for our citizens. The adoption of the law will be an important factor in the prevention of HIV/AIDS in Kyrgyzstan.

Finally, I would like to express gratitude to the generous assistance of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, other international donors and United Nations agencies. I would also like to express the strong commitment of Kyrgyzstan to making every effort to strengthen international cooperation and the effective implementation of the objectives of the 2011 Political Declaration.

Mr. Tin (Myanmar): At the outset, I wish to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on accelerating the AIDS response (A/67/822). We are gathered here today to review the progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration on AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex) adopted two years ago. The Declaration has contributed to intensifying our efforts to eliminate HIV/AIDS and renewed our commitment and global solidarity. We were recently pleased to note that the number of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths has continued to decline as life-saving prevention and treatment services are reaching more people than ever before. We commend the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS for its leading role in coordinating our fight against that global health menace.

While significant progress has been made in the global AIDS response to date, the AIDS epidemic remains a global concern, as it is remains the sixth leading cause of death worldwide. As we enter the final years of striving towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), much remains to be done to reach our targets.

My delegation is of the view that the six recommendations outlined by the Secretary-General deserve our full consideration in order to seize the historic opportunity to lay the groundwork for an AIDS-free generation. In that regard, we wish to stress that the mobilization of sufficient financial resources and necessary assistance is indispensable to effectively implement those recommendations. With the 2015 deadline for the global targets rapidly approaching, all stakeholders must renew their focus on achieving concrete results.

AIDS is one of the priority diseases in Myanmar's national health plan. Responses to HIV/AIDS are carried out as a national concern with strong political commitment. A national strategic plan for HIV/AIDS 2011–2015 has been formulated to achieve MDG targets, aiming at reducing HIV transmission and HIV-related morbidity, mortality, disability and socioeconomic impact. In that regard, the Government of Myanmar has adopted three strategic priorities: the prevention of the transmission of HIV through unsafe sexual contacts and the use of contaminated injecting equipment; a comprehensive continuum of care for people living with HIV; and the mitigation of the impact of HIV on people living with the virus and their families.

Those national strategies have resulted in remarkable progress in our national AIDS response. HIV prevalence among all key populations has begun to decline. HIV prevalence among adults ages 15 to 40 was reduced from 0.61 per cent in 2009 to 0.53 per cent in 2012. While the prevalence in most key affected populations has declined, people who inject drugs continue to have a relatively high prevalence of HIV, at 18 per cent. It is estimated that in 2012 there were about 206,000 people in the population living with HIV, and around 7,700 new HIV infections occurred among adults over 15 years of age.

In our national response, there remains a major gap in prevention programmes. Myanmar needs to access more technical and financial resources, especially to increase the scale of harm-reduction programmes for

people who inject drugs. The distribution of needles and syringes and methadone maintenance therapy reach only around 25 per cent of the people who inject drugs. Currently, around 3,000 people are receiving methadone therapy, and it is expected that this figure will double by 2016. In that regard, Myanmar is seeking to identify new partners who will be in a position to help us in the effort.

By the end of 2012, over 53,000 people living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral therapy in Myanmar. That represents about a 43 per cent coverage of those who were in need of treatment. In the same year, close to 3,000 HIV-positive mothers received antiretroviral medications through the programme to prevent mother-to-child transmission, which was scaled up in 2012 to cover 253 out of 330 townships. We are confident that if Myanmar receives sufficient resources to provide lifelong antiretroviral treatments for HIV-positive mothers, it would be able to achieve the target of eliminating new HIV infections in children and substantially reducing AIDS-related maternal deaths set forth in the 2011 Political Declaration.

Provider-initiated testing and counselling will also be carried out by the national tuberculosis programme. By 2016, it is expected that up to 129,000 tuberculosis patients will receive an HIV test and will be referred immediately to antiretroviral treatment if their individual test indicates that they are HIV-positive. There is a need for HIV counselling and testing to be expanded through targeted community awareness-raising campaigns using a multichannel communications approach. We hope that these measures will lead to achieving another target for the elimination of stigma and discrimination against people living with and affected by HIV.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to emphasize that in order to bring about an AIDS-free generation, the post-2015 international development agenda should clearly reflect the role of an effective AIDS response as an essential pillar of future health and development efforts. With the continued support of development partners, Myanmar will be able to more diligently focus its national response on strategic treatment and prevention interventions and to prioritize high-impact interventions. We therefore fully support the view that the concept of shared responsibility and global solidarity must be further advanced to accelerate our global efforts to bring the AIDS epidemic under complete control.

Ms. Boissiere (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Haiti on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to the fight against HIV and AIDS and continues to lead a proactive campaign aimed at prevention and ensuring universal access to necessary information, treatment, care and support, particularly among key populations.

In an effort to effectively address the epidemic in Trinidad and Tobago and fulfil its commitments, including those undertaken in the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex), the Government has approved a new National Strategic Plan 2013-2018, which is being implemented by the national coordinating interim HIV agency within the office of the Prime Minister. The Plan identifies five priority areas for addressing HIV and AIDS: prevention, which combines behavioural, biomedical and structural interventions; treatment, care and support; advocacy and human rights; strategic information; and policy and programme management. It also identifies sex workers, men who have sex with men, young people and prisoners as the main populations in Trinidad and Tobago affected by HIV.

Trinidad and Tobago has made considerable progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS, including towards achieving the targets contained in the 2011 Political Declaration. Nonetheless, a number of challenging areas remain, in which further assistance and cooperation with partners are required.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has afforded great priority to reducing the sexual transmission of HIV by 50 per cent by 2015; achieving a 90 per cent reduction in mother-to-child transmission; providing universal access to treatment; and eliminating stigma and discrimination. It is noteworthy that a 25 per cent reduction in new diagnoses of HIV was observed between 2008 and 2011. We are also on track for achieving the targets of reducing mother-to-child transmission and providing universal access to treatment by 2015.

As behavioural change is a key factor for decreasing new infections, initiatives have been undertaken to ensure access to comprehensive knowledge about HIV to assist young people in making informed decisions and choices about their sexual behaviour. The goal

of reducing the sexual transmission of HIV will also require greater focus on prevention strategies for persons living with HIV, especially key populations. An assessment of the effectiveness of current strategies on high-risk behaviour among the general and key populations also needs to be undertaken.

In the area of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, in 2012 there were two cases in Trinidad and none in Tobago. From 2006 to 2011, there was a general increase in the percentage of HIV-positive women receiving antiretrovirals, from 68.1 per cent to 85.9 per cent, to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission. The national coordinating machinery is also collaborating with civil society to disseminate more information on HIV-positive mothers having HIV-negative babies. More campaigns will be designed to ensure that women are tested early during pregnancy so that, if they are HIV positive, the necessary measures can be taken to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

Currently, over 70 per cent of patients who are eligible for treatment are receiving treatment and care. Moreover, HIV care and antiretrovirals are provided free of charge, and continued sustainability is guaranteed through public financing of the national antiretroviral treatment programme.

Between 2005 and 2009, Trinidad and Tobago achieved the target of reducing tuberculosis deaths among persons living with HIV by 50 per cent. Measures for improved surveillance of HIV/tuberculosis co-infections will be put in place. Trinidad and Tobago also recognizes the need for greater integration between tuberculosis and HIV programmes and will explore ways in which this can be achieved.

Women and girls face a greater risk of infection with HIV due to a number of circumstances, including gender-based violence, sexual abuse, early marriage among some ethnic groups, sexual partnerships between men who have sex with men and transactional sex. Male gender norms that encourage or condone high-risk behaviours and deter men from seeking health services in a timely manner also harm boys and men. While action has been taken to address violence against women and gender inequality, further action is necessary to address the inadequate focus on boys and men, the integration of sexual abuse issues into HIV programming, and the lack of strategic information required to inform decisions and policies, reviews of legislation and programmes aimed at education and behavioural change.

Trinidad and Tobago wishes to underscore on this occasion the importance of sustainable financing to facilitate a continued and effective HIV response and support being provided in relation to the burden of the disease. In this connection, we welcome the promising investment framework recently introduced by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the opportunities it provides for, among other things, establishing priorities and identifying areas in which further technical assistance is required. Furthermore, the role of civil society in this regard cannot be overemphasized. We are deeply committed to continuing collaboration with civil society and the private and international sectors as we identify more efficient ways of using existing resources and creative means to attract new resources.

Nationally, the issue of the integration of the HIV response into other programmatic areas has been given increased focus, particularly in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago views the approach of linking HIV with broader development and health issues favourably. Discussions have therefore commenced with the aim of developing approaches that are integrated with the work on non-communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health and tuberculosis programmes. The expected outcomes are a strengthened national network for the delivery of antiretrovirals and improved accountability and effectiveness in meeting various obligations and targets. Our national strategic plan includes the target of 50 per cent of health facilities offering integrated health services, including for HIV, by 2018.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago will continue to be aggressive in its campaign to achieve the targets identified in relation to the fight against HIV and AIDS, including those contained in the 2011 Political Declaration. As effectively addressing the issue of HIV and AIDS is a shared responsibility, we also thank our partners for the assistance provided and reaffirm our commitment to continue collaboration with UNAIDS, the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS, the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the United States Agency for International Development, the Centers for Disease Control and others at the national, regional and international levels in working towards an AIDS-free generation.

Mr. Msosa (Malawi): The Malawian delegation wishes to align itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of African States and the Southern African Development Community, and thanks the Secretary-General for his report (A/67/822) entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration".

This meeting truly provides us with an opportunity for introspection. As countries, the question is: What have we done to arrest and reverse the scourge of AIDS? History will judge us either favourably or harshly depending on our commitment to taming the tide of HIV/AIDS.

In this vein, Malawi has graciously embraced the opportunity to be part of the global solution to fight the HIV/AIDS scourge through the appointment of Her Excellency Mrs. Joyce Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi, as co-chair of the new Lancet Commission of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, together with the Chairperson of the African Union, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma of the Republic of South Africa and Mr. Peter Piot, Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The Commission was launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 26 May, on the sidelines of the just-ended African Union special summit.

The battle cry for the Commission is to move the world from HIV/AIDS to sustainable health. To achieve this overarching goal requires a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders. Access to treatment should change from being vertical to horizontal. Never should people continue to die of AIDS in the South when in the North AIDS has been reduced to a mere non-life-threatening disease. The developed countries lend a helping hand by pooling enough resources into the Global Fund. The developing countries should also prioritize the health sector and fulfil domestic funding for the sector. Empirical evidence is there for everybody to appreciate what the Global Fund has achieved so far in making antiretroviral drugs available to some AIDS sufferers to prolong their lives.

One of the terms of reference for the new UNAIDS Lancet Commission is to look into how antiretroviral drugs can be manufactured cheaply and made available to HIV/AIDS sufferers in resource-constrained countries. That is a cause worth supporting, and the Malawi delegation therefore wishes to call upon the United Nations community to resoundingly welcome the coming into being of the new UNAIDS Lancet Commission. Informed by a diverse group of HIV and health experts, young people, activists and political leaders, and drawing upon insights gained from on-line crowd sourcing and engagement with constituencies, the Commission will deliberate on strategies to ensure that the vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths can be realized in the coming decades. The Commission's work will culminate in a report to be published by *The Lancet* in early 2014 to inform the post-2015 development agenda. Its first meeting is scheduled to be held in Malawi at the end of this month.

Let us fight the good fight against HIV/AIDS and win it.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic is firmly committed to promoting and defending all human rights. For that reason, we promote health as a right enjoyed by all our people. It is vital to development, which must guaranteed.

Argentina reaffirms its conviction that the right to health has priority over commercial interests and that intellectual property rights should not prevent measures from being taken to protect public health. We therefore reiterate the importance of the effective implementation of the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. In that context, I underscore that Argentina has made significant progress in its response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We aim to move towards universal access to integrated prevention, treatment, care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Argentina's Ministry of Health has established universal coverage for diagnosis, monitoring and antiretroviral medication for opportunistic diseases, both in public-health centres and in terms of social security and private health care. According to the most recent statistics, approximately 120,000 people are infected with HIV in the Argentine Republic today. In our country, treatment for people infected with HIV is free, and 70 per cent of patients receive medication directly from the national Ministry of Health.

Argentina has vertical transmission rates of between 4 and 5 per cent. We aim to further reduce the rate to less than 2 per cent through such measures as mandatory testing, free treatment, the substitution

of breastfeeding and planned caesarean sections, which are already being implemented. The reduction in vertical HIV transmission, which involves passing the virus from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth, is the most effective prevention strategy.

In the past 15 years, the rate of new AIDS infections has decreased by 58 per cent and the mortality rate by 42 per cent in my country. At this time, about 1,400 people die in Argentina from HIV/AIDS each year, which represents an average mortality rate of 3.5 per cent in recent years. There has been a levelling off of mortality, as also reflected in the rate of new diagnoses and the prevalence of infected people.

In Argentina, people living with HIV have access to medication available through high-quality generics. The city of Buenos Aires hosted the first meeting of States members of the World Health Organization on substandard/spurious/falsely labelled/falsified/counterfeit medical products, held from 19 to 21 November 2012. The holding of that event in our capital reflects the ongoing and systematic efforts being undertaken, together with other countries of the Union of South American Nations, in our work to ensure safe, high-quality and accessible drugs.

For my country, it is a priority to improve strategies to increase access, both through diagnostic studies and treatments, as well as by focusing on social integration strategies and people's right to development, which ensures a better quality of life. Optimizing strategies to improve people's access to prevention tools is also a priority. In that context, we have established strategic guidelines to improve access to diagnosis and treatment, promote the use of and access to condoms and preventive tools, promote and improve access to testing with counselling, and reduce the stigma and discrimination of vulnerable groups in the health system and throughout society.

Much remains to be done, and we cannot continue to dwell on our many accomplishments; rather, we must look to the way forward for Argentina and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In that respect, we underscore the importance of the provision by international organizations of relevant technical assistance to developing countries and least developed countries in order to contribute to the full implementation of the 2011 Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex).

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Haiti (see A/67/PV.84) on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community.

My delegation welcomes the opportunity to address this agenda item as the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2, annex) and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262, annex, and resolution 65/277, annex) remains of key importance to Jamaica. We thank the Secretary-General for his report on achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration (A/67/822), noting the cautious optimism conveyed therein. We concur with the findings calling for greater synergies between HIV programmes and broader development initiatives and for shared responsibility and global solidarity to bridge the existing funding gap.

Jamaica has made positive strides in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Through a multisectoral response, a five-year strategic plan has been developed around the following priority areas: prevention, treatment, care and support, enabling environment and human rights, governance and empowerment, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability. The collaborative approach embodied in our national response include Government, private-sector and faith-based organizations, and civil society.

Jamaica's prevalence rate stands at 1.7 per cent. Young adults are the most affected by HIV, with approximately 79 per cent of all reported AIDS cases in Jamaica occurring in the 20-49-year-old age group and 90 per cent of all reported AIDS cases occurring in persons aged between 20 and 60 years. The AIDS case rate among men continues to exceed the AIDS case rate among women, though that gap has been narrowing in recent years. The number of persons with AIDS decreased by 17 per cent between 2004 and 2010, and AIDS deaths were down 40 per cent over the same period. The number of HIV tests we have undertaken annually has more than doubled, from less than 100,000 tests per year prior to 2004 to over 258,000 in 2011. Nearly all pregnant women attending public health clinics in 2010 and 2011 were tested for HIV, while 84 per cent of HIV-infected pregnant women and 98 per cent of HIV-exposed infants received antiretroviral treatments in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission. The HIV epidemic profile of Jamaica showed a shift from a generalized epidemic to one in which HIV infections are largely concentrated in key populations.

With reference to specific targets from the Declarations, Jamaica has made its greatest progress in the reduction of mother-to-child transmission and the reduction of tuberculosis deaths among persons living with HIV. Both of those targets have been met or are on track to be met by 2015. Improvements have been seen in relation to the reduction in the transmission rates, closing the resource gap and eliminating stigma and discrimination. Those three areas, however, require more focused intervention in order for them to be achieved by 2015.

Jamaica has initiated or continued a number of prevention strategies, including the use of a multilayered media campaign targeting youth, women and men as well as a separate campaign for the tourism sector. Those strategies have focused on behaviour change, condom use, voluntary counselling and testing, and transactional sex.

The national programme has also carried out its targeted intervention strategies for specific groups, with keen focus on the most at-risk populations. Those interventions, conducted at the community level, have incorporated a multi-stakeholder, multiservice approach to outreach, which includes, for example, widespread access to a range of public- and financial sector services. Targeting has also taken place in schools with the aim of providing adolescents with information on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and life skills-based information.

Despite those successes, the threat of HIV remains clear and present. While prevalence rates have declined in general and among certain groups of most at-risk populations, there is insufficient movement among some groups such as men who have sex with men, where factors such as stigmatization continue to pose a stubborn challenge. Additionally, the sustainability of our success is threatened by the high cost of treatment, which at the present time is primarily funded through international grants. As funding dwindles, however, support for those critical areas may be jeopardized, which increases the risk of reversals of the hard-won gains made in tackling the disease. In that regard, Jamaica's performance in increasing access to antiretroviral treatment, though improving, remains below the baseline.

In addition to allocations from the Government, funding for our national HIV/AIDS response programme is primarily sourced through the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as by the United States Agency for International Development and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Despite an increasing allocation from public funds, it would be extremely challenging for the Government of Jamaica to fund the programme in its entirety on its own. Given the fact that funding from some international sources has recently been, or is due to be, discontinued, new and creative partnerships and mechanisms are being pursued to ensure that the commitments made to advance the fight against HIV are maintained. Jamaica's classification as a middle-income country and the attendant withdrawal of donor funding poses a significant challenge to meeting the goal of closing the funding gap.

In closing, let me reiterate Jamaica's firm commitment to meeting the goals set in the Declarations and to partnering with the international community to eliminate the epidemic from among us.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by congratulating the President for convening today's timely debate on an issue that is of concern to all of us. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for providing us with a comprehensive report (A/67/822) on achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS (resolution 65/277, annex).

The global community has embarked on a historical undertaking to lay the foundation for the eventual end of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. A new era of hope has emerged in countries and communities across the world devastated by HIV/AIDS. We have witnessed unprecedented gains in reducing the number of adults and children newly affected by HIV, in lowering the number of AIDS-related deaths and in implementing a policy framework that accelerates progress.

However, as we enter the final years of working towards fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, much remains to be done if our targets are to be met. HIV/AIDS treatment has not yet reached 7 million people, and the people who are most affected by HIV/AIDS still experience marginalization and exclusion.

As indicated in the 2012 report of UNAIDS, there were more than 700,000 fewer new HIV infections globally in 2011 than in 2001. There has been a 60 per cent increase in the number of people gaining access to lifesaving treatment, and 8 million people were able

to obtain antiretroviral therapy. We have also seen a reduction in new HIV infections among young people.

As we are discussing the issue on the agenda today, we are delighted to note that 186 countries, including Indonesia, have submitted comprehensive reports on the progress made in the international HIV/AIDS response, which is one of the highest response rates of any international health and development monitoring mechanism. It is also a reflection of the breadth and depth of the global commitment to responding to HIV/AIDS.

For our part, Indonesia has done its utmost to achieve the 10 specific targets to be met by 2015 as articulated by UNAIDS and mandated by the Political Declarations. We are committed to monitoring and reporting on progress and challenges encountered in our national HIV/AIDS responses. For the period covered by the report, UNAIDS has stipulated 30 indicators to measure progress in the response to HIV/AIDS in Indonesia. We have completed extensive surveys for a national HIV/AIDS policy framework. We have engaged civil society and other key stakeholders, and developed policy approaches for HIV prevention and treatment.

Like many other countries, Indonesia is also facing challenges, since over the past five years the cumulative number of reported HIV infections has, unfortunately, risen sharply. HIV/AIDS has been concentrated among key affected populations, resulting from a mix of two modes of transmissions, namely, sexual transmission and drug injection. According to our national estimates, about 186,000 people are infected with HIV and 6.5 million are at risk.

In tackling those challenges, we have developed a national Millennium Development Goals acceleration action plan for 2011-2015 to keep HIV/AIDS high on the national development agenda. We have targeted a response to achieve coverage of 80 per cent of the key affected populations by 2014.

Our commitment to responding effectively to the epidemic and to reach national and international targets is also reflected at the regional level. At the nineteenth Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) Summit in November 2012, we declared our commitment to working with ASEAN to achieve zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero HIV-related deaths by 2015.

In the past two years, our National AIDS Commission has grown in skill and importance from the national to provincial and district levels. The Commission has become a multi-sectorial body directly responsible to the President, and is thereby providing leadership, management and coordination with a far more intensive, comprehensive, integrated and coordinated response.

Indonesia very much appreciates the contribution made by the private sector and non-governmental organizations, both domestic and international, that have helped the Government to address challenges presented by the twin epidemic of HIV/AIDS across the country. Our activities in response to the needs and aspirations of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS have become more diverse and accessible.

In conclusion, to achieve our vision of getting to zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths, the global community needs to renew its sustained commitment and solidarity. More importantly, the available evidence and limited resources should be used as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): Ten years ago, AIDS was wiping out a generation of individuals across the world and reversing important health and development gains, especially in Africa. Hospitals were overwhelmed and patients were not getting the antiretroviral treatment that was available. AIDS created millions of orphans, many of whom were unable to attend school without the support of a parent. AIDS threatened the very foundation of society.

In response to the threat, in February 2003 United States President George W. Bush called for the creation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR. With bipartisan support in Congress, PEPFAR became the largest commitment of any nation to combating a single disease. Under President Obama's leadership, the United States has continued to strengthen its commitment to PEPFAR, which this year marks its 10-year anniversary. In November 2012, the United States Government released the PEPFAR blueprint, which captures the experience and lessons learned over the past 10 years and provides a clear outline for how PEPFAR will work to help bring countries to and beyond the programmatic tipping point in their epidemics. The United States is proud of the contribution that PEPFAR has made to the global AIDS

fight, and we appreciate the references made to the programme by other delegations in their statements in this body.

What a difference a decade can make. Today, as a result of landmark scientific advances coupled with success in implementing effectiveness programmes, AIDS is no long a certain death sentence. Globally, over half of those eligible for treatment of HIV/AIDS are now accessing these life-saving medications and national HIV responses are more successful and sustainable. Treatment efforts and a combination of other evidence-based prevention strategies has successfully dropped the rate of new HIV infections by more than half in 25 low- and middle-income countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Through efforts aimed at HIV, countries have strengthened health systems; improved capacities around maternal health, immunization and nutritional care; built and renovated child-health clinics; and put laboratories in place that support providers as they make diagnoses and monitor care.

Together, by scaling up programmes with urgency and commitment, the world has demonstrated what is possible with focus, resources and science. The impact of HIV investments over the past decade has been extraordinary, but we have not yet finished the job. Many countries have not reached universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, and the progress made in halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV is encouraging but tenuous. HIV remains the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age in low- and middle-income countries. We have learned from history that if we do not finish what we start, the disease will resurge, with greater virulence.

The United States remains committed to the global fight and will continue to support global efforts to ensure that the momentum to scale up HIV high-impact prevention treatment and care interventions required to reach the Millennium Development Goals and to create an AIDS-free generation is maintained and increased. But we cannot do it alone. Creating an AIDS-free generation is a shared responsibility. We need the continued commitment and leadership of partner countries, reinforced with support from civil society, people living with HIV, faith-based organizations, the private sector, foundations, donor nations and multilateral institutions. To achieve sustainable health systems, we must work together with partner countries to advance their efforts to care for their own people.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is and will remain critical if we are to turn the tide against HIV as well as tuberculosis and malaria. Towards that end, the United States calls on all nations to support the achievement of the ambitious goal set forth in the Global Fund's fourth replenishment cycle. President Obama's fiscal year 2014 budget of $1.65 billion for the Global Fund is a strong demonstration of our support. The United States challenges other donors to increase their contributions. The replenishment comes at a critical turning point for the Global Fund and for the global fight against these diseases. Our shared investments in programming and science over the past decade have led us to the current situation where we are within reach of the tipping point of changing the course of these diseases, especially in reducing HIV incidence.

The United States Government is particularly pleased with the Global Fund's progress in undertaking needed reforms. We are excited by the potential of the new funding model to maximize the impact of contributions to the Global Fund. We appreciate the technical support provided by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. It is imperative that together we commit, maintain and increase both the momentum and focus on HIV as one of the measurable components for global health goals beyond 2015.

Mrs. Rebello (Brazil): Brazil considers this annual plenary meeting to be of crucial importance. It is the moment Member States review the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2, annex) and the Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262, annex, and resolution 65/277, annex). It is when we reaffirm the outcome of the 2011 High-level Meeting on AIDS (see A/65/PV.95), the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and its ambitious targets for 2015, especially those related to HIV prevention policies and treatment, and to combating discrimination against those living with HIV/AIDS.

In that connection, my delegation commends the Secretary-General's current report, contained in document A/67/822. It assures us that although we have a long way to go in achieving a generation free of AIDS, much has already been accomplished, thanks to the ongoing multilateral efforts. As the report shows, the number of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths continues to decline globally, because life-saving prevention and treatment services are reaching more

people than ever. In 25 low- and middle-income countries, the rate of new HIV infections has been reduced by more than half. Most significantly, half of the global reductions in new infections in the past two years have been among newborns, paving the way for an AIDS-free generation.

Combating discrimination and addressing the social context surrounding HIV/AIDS have played a paramount role in those advances. By promoting equitable policies, Brazil has been able to achieve universal access to diagnosis, treatment and care, reaching out to all groups living in vulnerable situations. The fight against AIDS in Brazil includes special attention to young people, who benefit from national programmes such as the partnership between the Ministries of Education and Health and United Nations agencies and funds — including UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund — aimed at health and prevention in schools. That programme has expanded the dialogue on sexual and reproductive health and involved the whole school community, students, parents and teachers. In Brazil today, about 10,000 public schools distribute condoms in a programme associated with educational activities. The goal of the Brazilian Government is to ensure universal access to information and prevention materials so that young people can make informed decisions.

The way Brazil is dealing with HIV/AIDS would not be as successful as it has been without the cooperation of third parties. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the key role that the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has been playing in fighting the epidemic and to note particularly the national consultation that UNAIDS recently organized on Brazil's progress in meeting the 10 targets established in the 2011 Political Declaration, at which strategic recommendations were made for continuing our efforts.

Countries and regions should be able to respond to specific patterns of the epidemic. At the same time, Governments in high-prevalence countries must establish strategies that focus on the needs of those at a higher risk of infection. Discrimination and limited access to health services contribute to making such key affected populations disproportionately vulnerable to infection. Brazil believes that the elimination of HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths can be achieved in any region.

The success of Brazil's policy in combating HIV/AIDS demonstrates that this fight is also a struggle to overcome challenges to financial sustainability. The public-health imperative must always prevail over commercial interests. More affordable drugs, at fair prices that correspond to a country's economic situation, thus constitute a key pillar of that policy. Full implementation of the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), as agreed on in the Doha Declaration and the World Health Organization's Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property, is a powerful and effective tool for meeting universal-access targets. Brazil reaffirms its support for horizontal cooperation, which enables developing countries, particularly low-income nations, to benefit from TRIPS flexibilities.

Brazil will continue to support the efforts of the international community by financing and executing cooperation projects, as well as by donating to entities such as the International Drug Purchase Facility, of which Brazil is a co-founder and an active member. We believe that the recent budgetary challenges faced by entities dedicated to fighting HIV/AIDS will be overcome only if the industrialized countries keep their promises to continue and expand their donation plans and international cooperation.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General and welcomes his useful and comprehensive report on "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822).

I wish to align myself with the statements made on behalf of the Southern African Development Community and the Group of African States, and to offer some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Significant progress has been made in the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, my region remains the single most affected by the epidemic worldwide. We salute the tireless efforts made by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in particular the personal involvement of its Executive Director, Mr. Michel Sidibé. It is our belief that such strides could not have been made without the firm support of UNAIDS, and we urge it to continue in that vein.

The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has played and will continue to play

an integral role in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Although much progress has been made around the world in that fight, it is unlikely that we will be able to achieve our goals by 2015. We must use the remaining period to redouble our efforts aimed at promoting universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care, and to support those who need it. It is clear that HIV and AIDS will remain a major global challenge beyond 2015; hence the need to position the subject firmly on the post-2015 development agenda. We urge the international community to support national programmes that focus on poverty eradication and improve economic growth. The fight against HIV and AIDS can benefit from progress made on other MDGs.

It should be noted that no single country can be successful in the fight against this epidemic on its own. International and bilateral partnerships remain vital. We could not agree more, therefore, with the Secretary-General's call for shared responsibility. While financial resources remain a challenge, we are, however, grateful to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as to the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In that regard, we are grateful to the Government of the United States of America for the support it continues to give my country through PEPFAR, whose contributions have resulted in a longer lease on life for thousands affected by and living with HIV and AIDS. We commend them for their commitment and continued support and would like to ask that increased funding be made available in order for us to sustain the gains we have made so far.

Access to HIV drugs is another challenge, since the cost of acquiring those much-needed drugs is very high. A concerted effort should be made within the global pharmaceutical industry to make such drugs more affordable and easily accessible, especially in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, where infection rates are highest.

All peoples' human rights should be protected and safeguarded, people living with HIV and AIDS included. We must end discrimination against them. Owing to such stigma and discrimination, people are either reluctant to take advantage of the available treatment and support or do not do it at all. Certain countries also continue to impose travel restrictions on people living with HIV and AIDS; such actions are discriminatory and should be abolished. We should also enhance our efforts to ensure gender equality, as well as the empowerment of women and girls, in terms of people living with HIV and AIDS. That includes in particular their ability to freely exercise their reproductive rights and having access to quality health-care services and education. Investment in research and development should be given priority so that new, safe and cost-effective methods to reduce women's vulnerability to HIV transmission can be developed.

South Africa's response to HIV and AIDS is based on strengthening its health-care systems, including primary health care. We have integrated our HIV programmes with other health services, including those related to women and children's health, tuberculosis and non-communicable diseases. South Africa has adopted a comprehensive approach that includes every Government department and all institutions, organized structures, communities, households and individuals.

Our social protection programmes have also yielded positive results as we provide social grants to people living with AIDS. As such, we have made progress and are continuing to do so in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and extending the lives of mothers by ensuring that pregnant women and their newborns have access to prophylaxis that reduces the risk of HIV transmission during pregnancy and delivery. South Africa has responded comprehensively through well-designed plans to deal with HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis. Among other things, we have significantly increased the number of health facilities providing antiretrovirals.

The vision of an AIDS-free world can be achieved if we intensify our efforts for an effective and more sustainable AIDS response in line with the concept of shared responsibility and global solidarity.

Mr. Mwanza (Zambia): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Djibouti on behalf of the Group of African States and the representative of Mozambique on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

At the outset, my delegation wishes to take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Accelerating the AIDS response: achieving the targets of the 2011 Political Declaration" (A/67/822).

Zambia has been making significant strides in the past 20 years in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and de-stigmatizing the disease among those who are infected and affected by it. My delegation is alive to the fact that combating HIV and AIDS and its impact

requires continuous, sustained political commitment and appropriate, effective policies. That was the essence of the June 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2, annex), adopted by global leaders at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV and AIDS, which they emboldened in June 2011 at the meeting on the 10-year review.

It is therefore worthwhile to note that during the 2011 review to assess the commitment to United Nations targets in Zambia, stakeholders acknowledged my Government's commitment to policies that continue to sustain the progress made so far in reducing HIV prevalence and implementing measures that will also contribute to containing the pandemic holistically.

It is gratifying to learn that the global AIDS-response progress reporting system has among the highest response rates of any international health and development monitoring mechanism. Countries such as Zambia do indeed face many challenges in tackling HIV and AIDS, but have nevertheless scored major achievements in improving prevention, access to treatment and care and support, as clearly shown by the trends reflected in the report, including a 50 per cent reduction in incidence, deaths, decreasing high-risk behaviour and meeting male-circumcision targets, and so on.

HIV and AIDS have for a long time been associated with issues related to stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Self-stigmatization and perceived and actual stigma have represented a face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in all geographical areas affected by HIV and AIDS. As part of the national response to HIV/AIDS, the Zambian Government — with the support of cooperating partners, civil society and religious groups — has included fighting HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, which has had a big impact on people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Religious groups play an important role in combating HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. They have been taken on board and have done a lot to combat stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. Because of the interventions, levels of stigma today are reduced.

In line with the national multisectoral intervention against the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Zambia, which was launched with the 2002-2005 Strategic Intervention Plan, followed by the 2005-2010 National AIDS Strategic Framework, programmes that include tackling discrimination have been designed for primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and a lot of progress has been made. Many businesses also have all-inclusive workplace HIV/AIDS programmes.

Zambia has made significant strides in including HIV/AIDS in school, college and university curriculums to increase awareness and reduce discrimination. People living with HIV/AIDS form support groups that operate freely in the country. Support groups are usually attached to health centres, and it is unusual to hear that they have experienced violence perpetrated against them on account of their HIV status.

The Assembly may wish to note that in Zambia, physical violence against people living with HIV/AIDS is not condoned. It is virtually unheard of and is a crime punishable under Zambian law. Employees are not required to undergo mandatory HIV testing and and are not dismissed from employment on account of living with HIV. That is against the law in Zambia.

Despite the strides made in tackling HIV/AIDS-related stigma, there are — like in any society — individuals who still harbour negative attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS, although the idea that "if you are not infected, you are affected" is almost universally accepted as truth.

In conclusion, my delegation will fall short of its responsibility if we do not comment on the alarming stigma figures listed on page 18 of the Secretary-General's report, citing the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) as the source. Having analysed the study that came up with that finding, as shown in the report entitled "People living with HIV Stigma Index", of January 2012, our preliminary observation is that the information is not a true reflection of the reality in the country.

The population size of the sample raises questions of objectivity, representativeness and generalizability — thereby bringing into question the study's validity. The sample size of key populations was in almost all cases too small — less than 0.6 per cent of the sample — to have any statistical significance and thus validity. The statistics contained in the report are therefore not representative of people living with HIV and AIDS in the provinces, let alone in the nation.

I urge UNAIDS to undertake studies together with my Government — which has the sole and primary responsibility of ensuring the safety and health of its people — and, of course, with the partners who complement Government's efforts, namely, the non-governmental organizations. Removing the Government from such studies will always give a lopsided picture. It is also important to control the variable confounding factors.

Many communities in Zambia still face challenges in their access to health-care facilities. That is not unique to people living with HIV and AIDS, but affects the whole population. The Government has recognized that challenge and is working to reduce its effects through the construction of new health facilities, innovative outreach to rural communities via mobile health services, and increasing the number of health workers and health-training facilities.

My delegation therefore recommends the deletion of the reference made to Zambia with regard to violence against people living with HIV and AIDS. My delegation will soon write to UNAIDS officially on the matter so that corrective measures can be put in place. We stand ready to work with UNAIDS and other strategic partners on the issue and other related matters so that we may achieve reduced sexual transmission of HIV by 50 per cent by 2015, eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2015, substantially reduce AIDS-related maternal deaths, and attain universal access to antiretroviral therapy.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 11.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations A/67/PV.86

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Thursday, 13 June 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Beck (Palau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 35

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/869)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.68)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.68.

Mr. Makharoblishvili (Georgia): Today I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia", contained in document A/67/L.68, and to seek the Assembly's support in once again recognizing the right of return of all forcibly displaced persons to their place of origin in a voluntary, safe and dignified manner, reaffirming respect for property rights and declaring forced demographic changes unacceptable.

A year ago, the General Assembly acted with resolve to guarantee the rights of the forcibly displaced in accordance with international humanitarian law, and tasked the Secretary-General with producing a report on the matter (see resolution 66/283). As in previous years, the current report of the Secretary-General reads:

> "No major changes were observed during the reporting period with regard to refugees and internally displaced persons exercising their right of return, and no new significant displacement was registered." (*A/67/869, para. 14*)

With more than 400,000 evicted persons denied access to their homes, it is our duty to call for their fundamental rights to be respected and for the principles we stand for in this Hall to be upheld, and we shall indeed continue to do so until the conditions for their voluntary, safe, dignified and unhindered return are met.

The draft resolution is of a purely humanitarian nature. Supporting it does not mean taking sides. Its exclusive focus on human rights was a deliberate choice in order to avoid political speculation when the basic rights of the displaced are at issue. Much could be said about the origin and development of the conflict that has led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and, most importantly, to waves of ethnic cleansing of Georgians, Abkhaz, Greeks, Armenians, Ossetians and others, whether Christians, Jews or Muslims. However, that is not what today's draft resolution is about.

The political and practical aspects of the conflict and its settlement are the subject of the Geneva international discussions mediated by the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union pursuant to the six-point ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008. Georgia

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-36227 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

is committed to those talks and to the principle of the non-use of force, a pledge my country has made and reiterated unilaterally on numerous occasions at the highest level, including in a letter from our President to the Secretary-General. Georgia will continue its engagement in those talks in good faith.

Whatever the outcome of the Geneva discussions, however, the political dimension of the talks should not hijack the fundamental human rights of those concerned. Indeed, as the Secretary-General's previous report rightly states,

> "The right of return and its exercise by an internally displaced person cannot be directly linked to political questions or the conclusion of peace agreements. It is essential to recognize return as both a human right and a humanitarian issue that must be addressed irrespective of any solution to an underlying conflict." (*A/66/813, para. 34*)

The draft resolution before us, therefore, is not a political tool aimed at obstructing the ongoing negotiations, as one delegation has repeatedly and misleadingly attempted to suggest, but forms the fundamental basis for respecting the human rights of all those evicted from the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions by encouraging the participants in the Geneva talks to redouble their efforts to ensure respect for human rights and create conditions conducive to people's voluntary, safe and dignified return. Regrettably, due to the prevailing environment and continued discussions among the parties, the development and design of a comprehensive timetable has remained unresolved. To that end, the Secretary-General calls on those involved in the Geneva Discussions to engage constructively on the issue, building on international law and the relevant principles.

Over the years, the Government of Georgia has taken broad steps to protect the rights of the displaced in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement by providing them with an improved livelihood in new settlements in rehabilitated and privatized centres and with financial assistance. Our State strategy on internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the related action plan were designed in close cooperation with the international community, with the aim of developing durable housing solutions and access to social services. In working to advance implementation of the action plan, the Government has spared no effort to alleviate the suffering caused by expulsion, including by allocating increased financial resources in its 2013 budget.

Georgia is also working to enhance confidence-building measures, particularly through our active participation in and strong support for the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism and our facilitation of people-to-people contacts. That said, alarming developments on the ground have added to our concerns. The recent intensified installation of barbed-wire fences along the Tskhinvali occupation line has compelled the local population to leave their places of residence, thus creating the threat of a new wave of IDPs. We shall act to deter such illegal activities and prevent new displacement.

An important aspect of today's draft resolution is its call for unimpeded access by humanitarian actors to the displaced population and those living in the conflict-affected areas. The absence of any internationally mandated monitoring mechanism in those territories makes the call even more urgent. In a situation where every international watchdog is blocked from entering the two Georgian regions, it is paramount that we redouble our efforts to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access.

Let me conclude my remarks by saying that we, as the General Assembly of the United Nations, are best placed to respond to the challenges of the international community and to stand up for respect for human rights. With that in mind, I urge the Assembly to send a strong message in support of the hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced persons and to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This is now the sixth year in a row that the draft text introduced today (A/67/L.68) has been presented to the General Assembly. Its sponsors invariably declare that in promoting this initiative they are motivated by concern for the needs of those who, as the result of well-known and tragic events, have been deprived of their homes and livelihoods and forced to leave their permanent places of residence. We have to conclude, however, that the current text, like its predecessors, is a highly politicized product. As before, the text has been prepared outside the context of the current geopolitical realities in the region. Thus, the title of the draft resolution itself and a number of positions in the text push the notion of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as belonging to Georgia, which does not take into account

the existence in the region of the independent States of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

While the draft resolution purports to be aimed at resolving the situation of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it in fact only complicates the already difficult negotiation process within the framework of the Geneva Discussions. They are, incidentally, the only effective format for negotiations for the representatives of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Georgia, including on humanitarian issues and the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons.

We are all well aware of Georgia's stubborn unwillingness to conclude legally binding agreements on the non-use of force with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Against that backdrop, the call to all participants in the Geneva discussions to intensify their efforts to establish a durable peace and to commit to enhanced confidence-building measures looks like demagoguery. If discussion of this subject in New York is proposed, as the draft resolution suggests, it is essential that representatives of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian sides be invited. Such a discussion makes sense only with their participation. Without them it is simply impossible.

The draft resolution again talks about developing some kind of timetable for the return of all internally displaced persons, ignoring the position of the Secretary-General, who has stated repeatedly and clearly in his relevant reports that such a step is impossible at this stage. Thus we have a renewed attempt to gamble with the fates of thousands of Georgians, Abkhaz, Ossetians and citizens of other nationalities who have suffered as a result of the Georgian authorities' shortsighted and aggressive policies.

The Russian Federation is convinced that the draft resolution submitted by Georgia to the General Assembly will not contribute to normalizing the situation in the region or to establishing trust between the Abkhaz, South Ossetian and Georgian sides, which is an essential condition for settling, among others, the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons resulting from an adventurist policy that culminated, as we all know, in Georgia's armed attack on a peaceful Tskhinvali on the night of 7 to 8 August 2008.

On this basis of the foregoing, the delegation of the Russian Federation requests a vote on draft resolution A/67/L.68 and will vote against it.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/67/L.68, entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia".

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Herczyński (Poland): Five years have passed since the General Assembly adopted its first resolution concerning the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region in South Ossetia (resolution 62/249). It is regrettable that many security, human rights and humanitarian challenges in the region of Abkhazia and South Ossetia still remain unresolved.

Poland is convinced that the humanitarian concerns of the affected population, including internally displaced persons, are a priority in the present situation. That issue has to be addressed regardless of the political disagreements of the actors in the region. In that regard, Poland reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

We continue to believe that the Geneva discussions are an important forum for strengthening stability in the region and for making progress on the security, humanitarian and other remaining challenges, as the Secretary-General himself puts it in his most recent report (A/67/869) of May 2013. Draft resolution A/67/L.68 rightly stresses the need for intensification of the current talks in order to ensure respect for human rights and create the conditions for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their places of origin. We appreciate the role of the annual reporting by the Secretary-General, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions. We are confident that those reports are a useful tool for keeping the international community informed about the situation on the ground. Taking that into account, Poland has decided to vote in support of the draft resolution, as it has in previous years.

Mr. Kolga (Estonia): I have asked for the floor to echo and reinforce the message conveyed in draft resolution A/67/L.68, which was introduced by the

representative of Georgia today. The fact that almost the same draft resolution containing the same calls for improvement has been on our agenda already for six years in a row unfortunately clearly illustrates the unchanged situation on the ground.

In recent months, the situation has deteriorated further, creating additional impediments to the rights of internally displaced persons. We remain particularly concerned about the increased fencing activity along the areas adjacent to the administrative boundary line.

Draft resolution A/67/L.68 is humanitarian in nature and we will vote in favour of it. Our decision arises from our strong and long-standing commitment to fundamental humanitarian principles, including the right to return, property rights and humanitarian access. We are speaking about human beings and their lives here today, and this cannot be called a "politicization" of a matter.

Still, we cannot overlook the fact that internal displacement in Georgia is caused and sustained by complex, unresolved political issues. Estonia believes that the issue of the internally displaced persons requires continuing international attention and only addressing it in an urgent manner will contribute to a solution of the conflict. In that context, I would like to underline the importance of the Geneva discussions and the continuous participation and important role of the United Nations in them.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on the full respect of the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Last but not least, we would like to call on others to join us and vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Yanouka (Israel): Israel views positively Georgia's strategy for engagement through cooperation, which aims to build trust and confidence among divided communities. Israel would like to take this opportunity to reiterate once again its support for and recognition of Georgia's territorial integrity. Israel does not support or recognize the unilateral declarations of independence by Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We reiterate our well-established position that the way to resolve long-standing conflicts is through a negotiated, mutually agreed approach, not through unilateral actions.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that there are over 26 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) around the world. Those people have been driven from their homes by wars, political disputes, criminal activity and natural disasters. There is no region in the world that is not touched by that human tragedy.

The United Nations has recognized the scope of the IDP problem and has attempted to act in a variety of ways. UNHCR currently helps over 15 million IDPs in 26 countries. The Secretary-General has a Special Representative on the human rights of internally displaced persons. The Human Rights Council has appointed a Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. And the General Assembly has adopted resolutions such as resolution 64/162, entitled "Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons".

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines views draft resolution A/67/L.68 as merely a region-specific elaboration of the humanitarian principles that undergird the international community's past and ongoing work on the issue of internally displaced persons. The draft resolution reaffirms the safe, dignified right to return for those displaced; stresses the importance of the property rights at issue; reaffirms the unacceptability of forced demographic changes; stresses the need for international humanitarian organizations to have access to the affected populations; supports the work on the humanitarian issues undertaken in the Geneva discussions, which, despite their acknowledged problems, remain the only forum for relevant stakeholders to meet and address the issues; calls for the elaboration of a timetable for return; and maintains the existing reporting instrument, namely, the Secretary-General's annual report.

While the international community may have some legitimate and ongoing disagreements on defining the outer parameters of the rights to be accorded to IDPs and States' obligations in that regard, today's draft resolution does not touch upon those issues. It instead reflects a narrow humanitarian application of universally agreed principles on a particular case of troubling internal displacement.

Since most of the world's IDPs are displaced due to wars and political disputes, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is fully aware that it is oftentimes difficult to divorce the humanitarian from the underlying political issues attendant in those tragedies. However,

we agree with the 2011 report of the Secretary-General on this issue, which stated that

> "the right to return and its exercise by an internally displaced person cannot be formally linked to political questions or the conclusion of peace agreements. It is essential to recognize return as both a human right and a humanitarian issue that must be addressed irrespective of any solution to an underlying conflict". (*A/65/846, para. 25*)

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has no interest in injecting itself into the ongoing discussions and negotiations among the parties or prejudging the complex legal and political issues that they must resolve. As such, we have closely examined the text of today's draft resolution for any hint of overt politicization, bias, or interference with ongoing processes. We are satisfied that the draft resolution concentrates solely on the humanitarian challenges of the IDP population at issue, and we commend the drafters for their focus and forbearance in that regard.

The international community cannot blithely espouse general principles without having the commitment to subsequently apply those general principles to specific contexts. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has previously expressed its concern for the humanitarian needs of IDPs in, among other places, Azerbaijan, Colombia, the State of Palestine and Haiti. On the face of the draft resolution, we are comfortable in expressing similar concern for the IDPs from the areas at issue today.

Accordingly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Ms. Burgstaller (Sweden): This is the fifth consecutive year that action is to be taken on the draft resolution before us since its introduction to the General Assembly. Unfortunately, no substantial progress has been made in the areas of security, human rights or the humanitarian field concerning the internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

Ahead of the upcoming international discussions scheduled for 25 and 26 June in Geneva, Sweden wishes to call on all of the participants in those discussions to work together towards sustainable arrangements related to security and the humanitarian situation, bearing in mind the needs of the local population.

Sweden would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internally recognized borders. Sweden will vote in favour of draft resolution A/67/L.68, as it has done in previous years, and we would also call on others to join us in supporting it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.68, entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu

Against:

Armenia, Belarus, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nauru, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Djibouti,

Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia

Draft resolution A/67/L.68 was adopted by 62 votes to 16, with 84 abstentions (resolution 67/268).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Azerbaijan informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegations of Saudi Arabia and Senegal informed the Secretariat that they had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): My delegation is wholly in sympathy with the plight of internally displaced persons in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Indeed, we are concerned that it has taken us far too long to find a solution to the problem. We very much respect the need for unimpeded humanitarian access to the affected population, but my delegation believes that a solution must be found to the problem and that we must be guided to such a solution by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law.

We have been encouraged in the past five years by the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation. The recent report of the Secretary-General (A/67/869) indicates that the Geneva process remains the only viable solution to the problem. My delegation's belief is that we need to avoid undermining the Geneva process or even prejudging its outcome.

We feel that the parties to the conflict need to exercise restraint and proceed along the lines of the Geneva process. By abstaining in the voting on the resolution today, Botswana is simply saying that the two parties to the conflict need to exercise restraint and to give the Geneva process a chance, since the report of the Secretary-General indicates that it remains the only viable solution to the problem.

Mr. Guerber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would like to explain its abstention in the voting on resolution 67/268, introduced by the representative of Georgia and entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia".

Expressing its ongoing policy, Switzerland recalls the obligation to pay particular attention to the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in post-conflict situations and their right to return to their place of origin. Switzerland has provided, in its territory, the most favourable conditions possible for the discussions held in Geneva in the aftermath of the 2008 conflict. It believes that to be the appropriate forum for discussions on the question of IDPs and refugees. Switzerland therefore supports all efforts of the international community aimed at achieving a solution based on consensus between the parties with respect to the question of IDPs and refugees.

Mr. Fernandes (Brazil): Although Brazil acknowledges the difficult situation arising from the high number of Georgian IDPs and refugees, we have maintained our abstention in the voting today out of the belief that resolution 67/268 deals with issues that are subject to the discussions in Geneva.

Brazil supports the territorial integrity of Georgia and does not recognize the independence of Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Brazil is confident that the situation in Georgia can be solved through dialogue and is encouraged by the recent exchanges between Georgia and Russia. Overcoming the challenges that the internally displaced persons and refugees face will depend on the creation of favourable political conditions for their return and a stable security environment.

In line with the Secretary-General's most recent report on the matter (A/67/869), Brazil urges the parties to make efforts to identify lasting solutions to the situation of internally displaced persons and refugees, keeping in mind, in particular, their right of return. Confidence-building measures, increased cooperation and the strengthening of the dialogue between the parties will be of particular importance to that end.

Ms. Ivanović (Serbia): I am taking the floor to explain our vote on resolution 67/268.

As a country that has been faced with a protracted refugee and internally displaced persons situation in its territory, Serbia is fully committed to finding just, comprehensive and sustainable solutions to displacement situations all over the world. We support the long-standing practice of the General Assembly of seeking common understanding in addressing sensitive humanitarian issues by adopting carefully negotiated resolutions by consensus. To that end, we believe that the General Assembly should continue to deal with displacement issues within the comprehensive framework of the thematic draft resolutions on internally displaced persons and refugees adopted in the Third Committee.

Let me emphasize that Serbia respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Member States, including Georgia, and understands Georgia's concern about the status of internally displaced persons and refugees. We support every effort to find a comprehensive and durable solution for the specific situations of internally displaced persons and refugees. Therefore, resolutions aimed at finding such solutions should, in our view, be adopted by consensus.

That is why, as in previous years, while recognizing the importance of the elements contained in the resolution that has just been adopted that apply to the problem of displacement in general, Serbia could not support it.

Mr. Eler (Turkey): I am taking the floor to briefly explain our position. We are concerned that the conflicts in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia remain unresolved. The situation has serious economic, social and humanitarian consequences, primarily for the people of Georgia, but also for the peoples of the Caucasus region as a whole.

Turkey supports all efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful resolution of these conflicts. We invite all parties to work towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace that would also provide for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. As a country of the region and a neighbour of Georgia, we stand ready to contribute all efforts towards this end. I would like to reiterate Turkey's firm commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

We continue to believe that the Geneva talks provide a valuable forum for also addressing the issue of the voluntary, safe, dignified and unhindered return of internally displaced persons and refugees. We hope that the discussions in Geneva can be made to achieve their full potential in order to bring about positive and concrete outcomes. To achieve that, we call on all sides to seriously engage with others in a cooperative manner and to take action to build confidence.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 34?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations A/67/PV.87

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

87th plenary meeting
Friday, 14 June 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session

The President: In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now invite members of the Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session should be elected from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

In that connection, I have been informed by the Chair of the Group of the Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of May 2013 that the Group has endorsed His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe for the presidency of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

After the adjournment of this meeting, there will be an opportunity for Member States to extend their congratulations to His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe, President-elect for the sixty-eighth session, in the Delegates Lounge East in the North Lawn Building.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, upon his election as President for the sixty-eighth session as the sole candidate put forward by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ambassador Ashe brings to this position extensive multilateral experience, having represented his country before the United Nations for close to 25 years. He has held leadership positions in more than 40 committees and organizations, serving, for instance, as Chairman of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It is precisely that topic that represents one of the most important themes for the sixty-eighth session, during which critical debates on achieving the Millennium Development Goals will take place, as well as further discussion about how to conceive and set the stage for carrying out the post-2015 agenda. I am sure that Ambassador Ashe will make every effort to bring the deliberations of the various General Assembly work streams deriving from the concluding document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex) to their respective successful conclusions.

I have no doubt that he will lead the General Assembly in a truly able and dedicated manner. I wish him all the best in taking on the responsibilities of the

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-36401 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

Office with the utmost respect for the equal rights and dignity of each Member State.

During the months to come, as the President-elect and his team step up preparations to assume their duties, I pledge to work with him to ensure a smooth transition between our presidencies. To that end, I place myself and my staff at his disposal in order to lay the groundwork for an efficient start to the sixty-eighth session. Once again, I express my congratulations to him.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session, to take the floor.

Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda): Today I stand before the General Assembly in the tradition of my sixty-seven distinguished predecessors, and I am deeply humbled and indeed honoured. I am also grateful for the trust and support that the Assembly has placed in me by electing me, by acclamation, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

The distance between my country's seat and this podium is merely thirty-six steps, yet the journey began many moons ago. Many other Members, in addition to my own Government, have graciously supported me, including my colleagues from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the Caribbean Community and last, but not least, those from my own regional group, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Without them, I would not be standing here. To each and every member of the General Assembly, I simply say "thank you". As I have done on so many occasions in the past, I will continue to count on each member's goodwill and willingness to work with me to find acceptable solutions in the year ahead.

Sixty-eight years ago, the Organization was founded in the wake of a terrible tragedy. Its Charter echoed a global longing for peace and cooperation. Since then, a steady stream of changes has reshaped our world, some positive, some negative, and some whose scope and magnitude are still evolving. I would posit that none among them has been more fundamental, more relentless and more far-reaching than the relationship between us, human beings, and the planet we inhabit. That reality affects each one of us.

A mere 18 months from now, the United Nations will launch its agenda for articulating the relationship between humankind and our physical environment. That agenda must be wholly universal. It must, in my view, be a development agenda that is relevant to all people and all societies, and it must bring about global transformation for everyone, with shared but differentiated responsibilities.

Implementing such an agenda will be a complex task — politically, socially, economically, environmentally, culturally and technically. Arguably, it may be the boldest and most ambitious project that the United Nations has ever had to accomplish, and we, the General Assembly, will need to be equally bold, ambitious and collaborative if we are to rise to the task we are about to undertake and ensure its completion. The undertaking is enormous, but we, the General Assembly, must find the courage to deliver on it. We have a shared commitment to work towards a collective goal and we are all accountable for our actions. We in the United Nations have been cautioned many times over that failure is not an option. But this time let us show the world that we are not resigned to failure and that we can be both bold and decisive in our actions.

As we consider our new agenda, let me highlight a few points. Above all, we must draw on the experiences — the lessons learned — from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, both in terms of results achieved and opportunities missed. We must also reflect on the new and emerging development challenges, with attention to two main goals, namely, overcoming poverty and insecurity and ensuring sustainable development.

Both time-bound global goals and national-level targets with measurable indicators will need to be developed. New and revised partnerships and bold political leadership at all levels are paramount. We must skilfully integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability, and we must balance the practical with the aspirational. Finally, our commitment to a world of opportunity, equity, freedom, dignity and peace — the principles of the Millennium Declaration of 2000 (resolution 55/2) — should not just be reaffirmed; they must also be re-energized.

Our agenda, which is formally known as the post-2015 development Agenda, must represent a significant evolution in the thinking of the international community, and it must envision an interdependent, planetary community regardless of development levels. The time has come for the General Assembly — the

supreme, deliberative organ of the United Nations — to exercise its collective responsibility and begin as soon as possible the process of finalizing the one shared, sustainable development agenda. To say it more clearly, development in general, and sustainable development in particular, is the work of the General Assembly. Very simply put, it is our reason for being.

During the upcoming sixty-eighth session, many of the outcomes of the Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as we just heard from the President, are expected to come to fruition. We are expected to provide the requisite leadership and clarity for the process. I sincerely believe we have a duty to deliver on our responsibilities in an open, inclusive and transparent manner.

I therefore declare the theme of the sixty-eighth session, as well as that of the annual general debate of the General Assembly, to be "The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage". We all know that simply identifying a theme is largely symbolic and not an end in itself. Having done so, however, we must now take the next crucial, perhaps even arduous, steps to tease out the theme, enhance its relevance, create engagement opportunities for Member States, transform challenges into opportunities and strengthen our collective unity of purpose and commitment. Let us forge ahead with dogged determination and be steadfast. The theme is not a mere slogan. It should be operationalized and lead to concrete action for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

With that in mind, I will convene a number of related events towards fulfilling that objective. Working closely with the Secretary-General and his team and the relevant United Nations funds, programmes and offices, including, but not limited to, the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the recently established Office for South-South Cooperation, my team and I will host high-level events on the following three topics: the contributions of women, the young and civil society to the post-2015 development agenda; human rights and the rule of law in the post-2015 development agenda; and the contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation and information and communication technologies for development to the post-2015 development agenda.

In addition to those high-level events, my team and I will work closely with Member States to convene three thematic debates. Each debate will be geared towards the further elaboration of the chosen theme. We will seek to provide results-oriented outcomes on the following issues: the role of partnerships; ensuring stable and peaceful societies; and water, sanitation and sustainable energy in the post-2015 development agenda.

In the course of the long lead-up to today, I have been deeply touched by all the advice from colleagues about what to highlight during the sixty-eighth session — also known as lobbying. To no one's surprise, in an Assembly as diverse as ours, ideas often differ. Nonetheless, I have identified the following common elements: the need for an open, transparent and collaborative presidency; greater involvement by the established organs of the General Assembly; and reinvigoration of the reform agenda of the General Assembly.

First, in response to the almost univeral call for an open, transparent and collaborative presidency, let me provide a very clear answer: yes. My team and I pledge to be open and fully transparent, and we welcome the Assembly's input for the work of the sixty-eighth session. However, let me be equally clear on another point. Whenever and wherever true leadership is required, whenever deadlocks must be broken and processes advanced, I will do my utmost to be resolute, fair, even-handed and unequivocal. On that the General Assembly has my personal assurance.

Secondly, beyond any shadow of a doubt, there is a need for greater involvement by the various organs of our institution in its work. Therefore, to ensure increased cooperation, coordination and exchange of information, it is my intention to hold regular meetings with the Secretary-General and senior members of his team and to continue the practice of holding periodic informal briefings, during which he briefs us on his priorities, travels and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations. In my meetings with the Presidents of Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the Chairs of subsidiary bodies, I will introduce periodic informal briefings by each to update the General Assembly on the work of those principal organs. Last but not least, I will also hold regular meetings with the General Committee. That will enable the Committee to assess

the ongoing progress in the work of the sixty-eighth session so that we may receive its counsel on how best to further our work. To that end, my team and I will work closely with the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and his team to ensure a smooth and productive sixty-eighth session.

Thirdly, with regard to reinvigorating the reform of the General Assembly, let me say that our relevance as an institution depends upon it. Any organization that cannot evolve or adapt to changing circumstances is at risk — any organization. Our time at the United Nations is a privileged time. The hopes and dreams of millions for a conflict-free world rest on us. We cannot afford to be indifferent or immune to the changing world around us. We cannot stand idly by as millions struggle, or merely settle for surviving, when there should be opportunities for all to thrive. Put another way, the United Nations must reform or it will become inconsequential.

A critical component of that reform is to revitalize the General Assembly and its work programme. What exactly does that mean? It means enhancing its role and authority and increasing its effectiveness and efficiency. Of course reform is needed in all the principal organs of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that I will strive to reinvigorate, advance and, yes, against incredible — and some would say impossible odds — conclude discussions on the reform of these organs. That is a top priority, and I call on each and every one of in the General Assembly to join me in making it a reality.

Finally, we must also be cognizant of the evolving challenges the use cyberspace poses. To that end, I intend to work with Member States on identifying ways in which the Assembly can, and should, address emerging cyberissues.

As the Assembly may know, I was born on a small island in the Caribbean. However, I take to heart the often-repeated maxim that no man is an island. I fully recognize that, given the task of my position, I will need to rely — indeed depend — on all members if I am to perform my duties effectively. As a start, I have assembled a team of highly capable, experienced professionals, most of whom are drawn from among the General Assembly's midst and represent the rich diversity that is our United Nations. This is only the beginning. But what I really need is for each and every Member State and individual to play a role in making the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly productive and results-oriented, since in reality we are all on the same team. I therefore welcome everyone on board.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe, President-elect for the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

I now give the floor to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I am very happy to be here today. I extend my warmest congratulations to Ambassador John W. Ashe on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. We have worked together on a number of important issues over the years. He shares my passion for sustainable development and my concern about the problem of climate change. He demonstrated his commitment by serving on the governing bodies of major United Nations environmental agreements. I am especially grateful for his service as co-Chair of the Bureau of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held one year ago.

Ambassador Ashe also gained valuable experience as Chair of the Fifth Committee. That is one of the toughest jobs at the United Nations, and it prepares one to work long hours. As Chair of the Group of 77 in New York, Ambassador Ashe led an influential and diverse coalition of States. Representing Antigua and Barbuda, he can help the Assembly make an important contribution to the 2014 International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

Ambassador Ashe has more than impressive experience and educational credentials. Above all, our new General Assembly President is a trusted partner with personal integrity. That is essential in the world of diplomacy, where one's word is the most valuable currency. He has a very strong presence; some even call it a force field. We see that most clearly when diplomats gravitate toward Ambassador Ashe to seek consensus. He is known as the go-to person when discussions break down. That happened in 2002 when he led negotiations on contentious issues at the World Summit for Social Development, and, more recently, when he co-chaired the Rio+20 negotiations.

Ambassador Ashe has a quiet confidence. His approach is gentle but direct. It works. He is always ready to engage with colleagues for the greater goals of helping the United Nations to transform our world. He will preside over an important session, when we push to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and begin shaping our global vision for the post-2015 future.

As the Assembly may know, I served as Chef de Cabinet for the President of the General Assembly in 2001 and 2002, and my Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, was himself an Assembly President. Our administration fully appreciates the value of the General Assembly. We are absolutely committed to supporting the Assembly.

I thank President Jeremić for presiding over such a dynamic and constructive session. I look forward to working with President-elect Ashe to realize our common goals. Let us make the most of our partnership in the year to come.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of African States to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, as well as to wish him every success in fulfilling his mandate. His vast and long experience at the United Nations and the immense goodwill he enjoys among his colleagues are real advantages that will certainly enhance his ability to advance the major projects of the sixty-eighth session. The President-elect has already made significant contributions. I am sure that his steady stewardship will steer our deliberations towards success.

The Group of African States would also like to recognize your commendable leadership and notable work, Mr. President, which guided the work of the Assembly over the past year. You have served the collective good of the General Assembly by helping to re-energize it in carrying out its functions and to ensure the Assembly's continued prominence in the work of the United Nations.

There is a great deal of work ahead of us. The international community is dealing with major challenges that entail significant stakes for States. Those challenges in particular affect the continent of Africa. Africa needs special attention from the United Nations to aid it in its efforts to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development and to combat insecurity. At a time when the role of the United Nations is hastened by an ever-increasing multidimensionalism and multilateralism in international affairs, let us continue our focus on the promotion of peace and security and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, while formulating the Sustainable Development Goals and shaping the post-2015 development agenda — the fight against climate change, ensuring respect for human rights, democracy and the empowerment of women.

In conclusion, on behalf of the African States, I would like once again to commit our full support to His Excellency Mr. John Ashe during his presidency.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Silva (Sri Lanka): On behalf of the States members of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, it is an honour to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. Ambassador Ashe is poised to take over the helm of the General Assembly at a time when the wide-ranging responsibilities and tasks of this principal organ are set to undergo further expansion. We are confident that the long and distinguished foreign service career of Ambassador Ashe will serve him in good stead in his new role.

Ambassador Ashe has assumed a leadership role in a wide range of United Nations bodies related to the fields of sustainable development, South-South cooperation, the environment, administration and budgetary matters, among others. He currently serves as President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. Some of his past leadership roles include serving as Chair of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session, Chair of the New York chapter of the Group of 77 and China and Chair of the Fifth Committee. He also serves on the governing boards of major United Nations funds and programmes.

The incoming President takes over from His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, who has very ably led the General Assembly during the past year. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, we would like to thank President Jeremić for undertaking a very ambitious task load during his presidency. During his tenure, we witnessed the increased involvement of the General Assembly in a variety of important global issues. We hope that the Office of the President of the General Assembly will be able to effectively complete the agenda of the sixty-seventh session in the remaining months under the leadership of President Jeremić. Currently, his Office is in the process of preparing for four high-level meetings, to be organized during the sixty-eighth session — on disability and development, the Millennium Development Goals, nuclear disarmament and international migration and development. The Asia-Pacific Group extends its warm wishes to President Jeremić for continued success in his future career.

We have a very complex, but optimistic, agenda ahead in the United Nations system. We are in a transition period of United Nations reforms, when many intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder processes aimed at the post-2015 period pose many opportunities as well as challenges. We hope that Ambassador Ashe and his Office will be provided with the human, financial and other resources to successfully cope with the increasing responsibilities of the General Assembly related to the post-2015 development agenda. The smooth implementation of the incoming President's workload will be facilitated by close cooperation among the Office of the President and the Main Committees of the General Assembly. During the transition period of the incoming President, the resources of the Secretariat should be fully utilized to ensure continuity and strengthen the institutional capacity of the presidency of the General Assembly. We also hope that the Office of the President will continue its close cooperation with Member States.

The Asia-Pacific Group hopes that Ambassador Ashe will effectively use this body to strengthen global peace, security and sustainability.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) considers it a great honour to convey our congratulations to one of our members, Mr. John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

Today, Ambassador Ashe is entering a new era of his outstanding diplomatic career. GRULAC recognizes him as a true custodian of the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Ambassador Ashe is a multilateralist at heart, with vast experience as chief negotiator and chair of many meetings of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Ambassador Ashe has also served on the executive boards of the primary programmes, agencies and funds of the United Nations, including environmental agencies, and was Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. He has also presided over ambassador-level meetings of the Group of 77 and China in New York, and has been recognized as a member of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of his diplomatic service at the global level. Currently, Ambassador Ashe is presiding over the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation.

The world continues to face various global threats as a result of civil wars, climate change, poverty, economic crises and health-care issues, among others. The United Nations must continue to adapt itself to address these global challenges. In that regard, GRULAC is certain that as the leadership of the General Assembly passes from the competent hands of its current President, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, to Mr. John Ashe, the General Assembly will continue to enjoy solid and reliable leadership.

(*spoke in English*)

GRULAC takes this opportunity to highlight the successful presidency of Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, and most notably his fruitful visit to the region in March and his consultative approach among the various regions with regard to the placement of pertinent items on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The Group recognizes the veritable strides made in advancing the United Nations agenda under the stewardship of Mr. Vuk Jeremić. As he prepares

to leave the Office of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, we are confident that his extensive political and diplomatic service will continue to engage the attention of the international community. In so doing, GRULAC wishes Mr. Jeremić every success in his future engagements.

In conclusion, GRULAC submits that the roles of the President of the General Assembly and its membership are mutually dependent and must be governed by the principles of mutual trust, respect and cooperation. Moving forward, GRULAC expresses significant confidence in the guidance of Ambassador John Ashe to steer this body along a path that will adequately address ongoing global challenges through constructive and meaningful dialogue.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland, who will speak on behalf of the Western European and other States.

Ms. Anderson (Ireland): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I have the honour to extend our warm congratulations to Mr. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. Ambassador Ashe is both a very familiar and very highly respected figure here at the United Nations. His diplomatic expertise across a range of issues is extensive.

During his tenure as Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations, he has presided over the Executive Boards of both UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, chaired the Fifth Committee and co-chaired the preparatory process for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. His tireless commitment to the sustainable development and climate change agenda is well known.

Those are but a few of the credentials justifying his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are certain that Ambassador Ashe's accomplished background and personal dynamism will contribute enormously to the work of the General Assembly during the sixty-eighth session.

I also take the opportunity to extend our appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for his role at the helm of the General Assembly and his work to advance the objectives of this session.

On behalf of the group of Western European and other States, I would like to pledge our full support to the President-elect during his tenure and wish him every success in carrying out his duties during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary): I am speaking as an Ambassador from Central and Eastern Europe and as one of the chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the intergovernmental process. You, Sir, and President-elect Ambassador John Ashe referred to that in your statements.

My delegation wishes to express its warmest congratulations to President-elect Ambassador John Ashe, and to reassure him that we very much look forward to working with him on realizing the strategic endeavours he so clearly indicated as a top priority for him and for the Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, the host country of the United Nations, I have the honour of warmly welcoming the election of Mr. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. My Government appreciates that Ambassador Ashe is willing to take on this role. He is richly qualified for that leadership position, given his vast experience in multilateral diplomacy, including his service with distinction as Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and its Ambassador to the World Trade Organization.

A true veteran of United Nations legislative process, Ambassador Ashe has ably presided over executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes for development, the Fifth Committee and the Commission on Sustainable Development, and just one year ago guided the membership through the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. We welcome his statement of priorities for the next session, including the Assembly's vital work on sustainable development.

The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly will be especially consequential for the United Nations, and we could not be in better hands. The United States

looks forward to working with President-elect Ashe and wishes him every success in carrying out his duties during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The United States also wishes to express its thanks to Mr. Vuk Jeremić for his dedicated service as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the sixty-eighth regular session

The President: As announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-eighth session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the States members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name is drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, Croatia was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-eighth session.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for drawing the lots.

I wish to inform members that, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting, the Assembly will hold the 88th plenary meeting to elect the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations A/67/PV.88

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Friday, 14 June 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Programme of work

The President: In the light of the need for further consultations among the regional groups regarding the candidatures for the Chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, the elections of the Chairs and bureaux of the Main Committees are postponed to a later date, to be announced.

I should now like to consult members with a view to proceeding to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly,

> "The Vice-Presidents shall be elected after the election of the Chairmen of the six Main Committees referred to in rule 98, in such a way to ensure the representative character of the General Committee".

It is also my understanding that the elections of the Chairs of the Main Committees will conform with annex II of resolution 48/264, of 29 July 1994, and will not have an impact on the geographical distribution of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the representative character of the General Committee.

If there are no objections, I shall take it that the General Assembly therefore agrees to proceed to elect the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 6

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

Election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session

The President: In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we shall now proceed to the election of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

All members of the General Assembly are eligible in this election except those already represented in the General Committee, namely, the country whose representative has been elected to the presidency of the General Assembly.

In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the annex to resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session shall be elected according to the following pattern: six representatives from African States, five representatives from Asia-Pacific States, one representative from Eastern European States, two representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States, two representatives from Western European and other States, and five representatives from the permanent members of the Security Council.

In accordance with paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, the election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly by secret ballot will be dispensed with when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-36407 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

We shall proceed accordingly.

I shall now read the names of the slate of endorsed candidates.

African States: Botswana, Cameroon, Guinea, South Sudan, Togo and Tunisia.

Asia-Pacific States: Malaysia, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Eastern European States: Romania.

Latin American and Caribbean States: Chile and Guatemala.

Western European and other States: Monaco and Spain.

Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each region, I declare those candidates elected, in addition to the five representatives from the permanent members of the Security Council.

The following States have therefore been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session: Botswana, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Guatemala, Guinea, Malaysia, Monaco, Romania, the Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uzbekistan.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the States that have been elected to vice-presidencies of the General Assembly for the sixty-eighth session.

I also wish to remind members that the Chairs of the Main Committees have not yet been elected. After the election of the Chairs of the six Main Committees, at a later date, the General Committee for the sixty-eighth session will then be fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

I wish to make an appeal to the Member States to try to resolve the problem of selecting Chairs for the six Main Committees so that we do not violate our responsibilities under the rules of procedure and the Charter of the United Nations much longer.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

United Nations A/67/PV.89

General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

89th plenary meeting
Friday, 21 June 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Draft decision A/67/L.70

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly allocated this sub-item to the Second Committee. Members will also recall that, at its 63rd plenary meeting, on 22 January 2013, the Assembly agreed to consider the sub-item directly in plenary meeting, proceeded immediately to its consideration and adopted decision 67/555, entitled "Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals".

We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/67/L.70.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/67/L.70, entitled "Intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/67/L.70?

Draft decision A/67/L.70 was adopted (decision 67/559).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Nemroff (United States of America): The United States thanks the delegations of Norway and Kazakhstan for their balanced and stoic facilitation, leading to the consensus adoption of decision 67/559, which establishes the composition of the intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing called for in the outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20). We were pleased just now to be able to join the consensus on this important decision. The United States strongly supports the international community's discussion of financing for development. Member States have identified a distinguished group of experts to participate in this process, and we have every expectation that they will produce a report that effectively informs the discussion surrounding the post-2015 development agenda, including sustainable development goals and the broader financing for development process.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-37038 (E)

Accessible document

Please recycle

We take the floor today to outline some concerns we have with the approach taken in establishing this intergovernmental committee of experts. We remain uncomfortable with the large-scale seat rotation and replacement arrangements adopted by regional groups. We see these as inconsistent with the terms set out in the Rio+20 outcome document. At a practical level, effectively bringing in a much larger number of participants through such arrangements would appear to defeat the purpose of selecting a defined expert body that can help direct the broader United Nations membership towards consensus. Member States should reconsider the wisdom of such hybrid intergovernmental expert approaches to working groups in the future.

Finally, we take this opportunity to reiterate our understanding that the report of the intergovernmental committee of experts shall, in addition to informing the various strands of the Rio+20 follow-up and the post-2015 development agenda, be an important contribution to the General Assembly's broader consideration of financing for development. Indeed, the committee's work must be fully integrated into the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council's financing for development process, which began in Monterrey, Mexico, at the International Conference on Financing for Development.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.